# ADVENTURES OF THE ·D·C·I·

MAJOR C. E. RUSSELL

Thieves, Drug Peddlers, Spies and Malefactors

# Adventures of the D. C. I.

By MAJOR C. E. RUSSELL

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# ADVENTURES OF THE
# D. C. I.
## (DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION)

# ADVENTURES OF THE D. C. I.

*Department of Criminal Investigation.*

By MAJOR C. E. RUSSELL

Author of

"True Adventures of the Secret Service."

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# ADVENTURES OF THE D. C. I.

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# ADVENTURES OF THE D. C. I.

## ALIAS LIEUTENANT JENKINS

ONE of the marvels of the war to those who had charge of policing France for the Americans was the ease with which an American soldier unable to speak a word of French succeeded in wandering all over France. Our patrols covering the distant towns and villages would from time to time pick up a straggler who was having the time of his life in some out-of-the-way French village. It seemed not to bother him in the least that he couldn't speak the language—he managed somehow.

This *Wanderlust* had created so many amusing situations and the officers and men of the Provost Marshal's Department had become so accustomed to them, that they no longer amused. But the case of Magee—well, that was unique.

It was in Bordeaux on one Sunday during the

month of July, in 1918, that I first encountered him, and by the end of the day I was brought to realize that to this versatile American soldier belonged the palm for cleverness, deviltry, and colossal nerve.

That Sunday afternoon was one of the hottest that I ever recall. So hot was it that the soldiers on leave in the city could not muster sufficient courage even to get into mischief, and the city in consequence was very quiet.

Sensing this situation I had withdrawn most of the military police from off the streets, leaving the policing in the hands of a few of my men from the Department of Criminal Investigation, because these men could go about in cool, civilian clothes. As for myself, I sat in the lee of an electric fan trying to snatch a few winks of sleep after a somewhat strenuous night.

"Major, what does the silver American eagle signify when worn on the right breast of an aviator's uniform?" was the question which startled me out of a doze to answer mechanically the insistent ringing of my telephone bell.

"Don't know! Why?" was my sleepy response, as I strove to get a grip on myself, wondering

whether the heat had so affected Sergeant Curlin that he was seeing things.

To my knowledge the eagle was never worn except to designate a colonel, and then it was worn only on the shoulder-straps. But here was a new thing—an officer wearing an eagle on his right breast.

"We-ll," drawled Curlin, "there's a first lieutenant of aviation floating around the plaza who's all decorated with medals. He has the spread-wings of a full-pilot, the *Croix de Guerre,* the *Médaille Militaire,* and the cross of the Legion of Honour. On his shoulder he's sporting the French cord, while on his right breast he's got a colonel's eagle."

"It's beyond me," I confessed. "But bring him in, and we'll look him over."

Within the half-hour Curlin appeared at the door of my private office escorting a somewhat disconcerted and more indignant first lieutenant of aviation.

"Here he is, Major," announced Curlin. "First, he refused to come; but I told him you said, 'Bring him in,' and that if he didn't want to come peacefully, why, I'd tuck him under my

arm like a sack of meal and carry him in that way. At any rate, he decided to come along." and—that doughty sergeant had the nerve to wink at me!

I could not repress a smile at the contrast as I sat there in my chair surveying the two. Curlin was such a big chap, standing six feet two inches, with broad shoulders and strong arms that looked fully able to have carried out his threat had the lieutenant balked. When Curlin received an order he always obeyed it. And when I said, "Bring him in!" I meant just that, and Curlin knew it.

Still smiling at the picture Curlin's tale had brought to my mind, I turned to study the lieutenant more closely and was somewhat surprised to note the youthfulness of his countenance. I knew that many a young chap in order to join the army had lied about his age, but it did not seem possible that any recruiting officer would have passed the one before me. Yet here he was, a youngster both in size and looks, in the uniform of a first lieutenant. As he stood there he gave me the impression that he had been melted and poured into his clothes, so "snappy"

and well-fitting were they. There was the least suspicion of a beard on his smooth face, which at that particular moment wore a look of profound indignation. From the soles of his highly polished boots, with their silver spurs, to the crown of his army cap, he had every indication of having just stepped out of some musical comedy. One would think he belonged to Broadway, not to the fighting lines of France. Yet, to give the chap credit, what he lacked in build he more than made up for in spirit.

"I shall protest against this outrage to General Pershing!" he sputtered. "I'm an American officer under orders to proceed to the United States as an aviation instructor. I wasn't creating any disturbance nor causing any trouble, and you've no right to molest me! Here are my orders," and the young scapegoat handed me an official envelope.

Sure enough, inside I found an official document ordering First Lieutenant W. H. Jenkins to proceed to the United States on the *Rochambeau* for duty as an instructor in aviation. On the order it stated that the ship would sail on Monday at six A. M. I looked through his other

papers and found them all in regular order. Nevertheless, I could not dismiss from my mind the impression that somewhere I had seen or heard of this chap before. His story, it seemed to me, did not ring true, but I couldn't place my finger on the identical spot. To enable me to dig the circumstances of our previous meeting from my mind, I determined to spar for time.

"Wait just a minute, Lieutenant," I soothingly replied to his tirade. "Your papers are all in regular order—I know the signature of General Scott too well to doubt them. You may rest assured, too, that you will receive full justice in case a mistake has been made. The reason that I asked Curlin to invite you to come to the office was a curiosity I had to know what the new decoration was for," I said, pointing to the silver eagle on his right breast. "Have a chair and enlighten me about what it means," I ended, pointing to a chair beside my desk.

Plainly flattered by my apparent interest in his decorations, the lieutenant quickly dropped his attitude of injured innocence, seated himself in the chair and, accepting a cigar, leaned back

as nonchalantly as any veteran and launched forth into a tale that rivalled that of "Horatius at the Bridge."

"Oh, it's the eagle, you mean?" he asked, in an offhand manner. "That's a new decoration given by General Pershing to those aviators who have attained the rank of an Ace. An Ace, you know, is an aviator who has shot down at least ten German planes—I have twenty to my credit. I received it just before I left the front."

One of my duties as Provost Marshal was to keep posted on the numerous changes in the American uniform; I was supposed to see that all officers and enlisted men conformed to the regulations in regard to the uniform, instead of wandering far afield as their individual fancy might lead them. I knew of no order which called for any such decoration, yet General Pershing might have "slipped one over" on us. Then, again, I was striving to place the face before me, so with apparent innocence I asked about the other medals.

"This one," declared the lieutenant, "is the *Médaille Militaire* which is given only to the enlisted men. I was in the French Army before

the States came in, and won it as a private in the flying corps. It was presented to me at the Battle of Verdun. This one," pointing to the Legion of Honour medal, "was presented to me for services in the Toul sector with the Lafayette Escadrille."

"And the *Croix de Guerre?*" I urged, fascinated that one so young should have lived through so much.

"Oh, that one?" he replied, with a toss of his head. "That's a common one among the Americans who served in the various branches of the French Army before the States came in. Almost every one of us has one of those."

I was more puzzled than ever by now. The chap's answers seemed plausible enough, yet I couldn't get away from that "hunch" in the back of my head.

Then, like a flash, I placed him.

During the war we had many deserters in France. Whenever an officer or an enlisted man was away from his outfit for more than ten days, without leave, he was declared a deserter. His description and physical identification marks were at once broadcasted to all the Provost Mar-

shals in France. I had kept a card index of all those deserters, and to that list I now turned for help.

Slowly I read the descriptions on the cards, one by one, looking for one that would fit the man before me. Finally, I came upon the name of Corporal Magee. This corporal was a general-court-martial prisoner who had escaped several weeks before from his company at the front. (A general-court-martial prisoner is one who has been tried and found guilty by the court and is held awaiting the approval of his sentence by the commanding general before being transferred to the prison, there to serve out his sentence.)

Silently, I read the description:

Blond complexion and hair;
Light brown eyes, set far apart in the head;
Long, smooth-shaven face; light coloured eyebrows;
Very light beard;
Five feet, eight inches, in height;
One hundred and thirty-five pounds in weight;
Slender; very youthful in appearance and talk.

As I glanced toward the man in front of me I saw the personification of what I was reading.

Then I at once determined upon a bold stroke to solve the identity of this officer.

"You are no more Lieutenant Jenkins than am I General Pershing!" I suddenly shot at him, confident that I would shatter his coolness by the suddenness of my onslaught.

"No-o? Then, who am I?" he coolly returned.

"You are Corporal Magee of Company C, of the ——th infantry, an escaped G. C. M. Prisoner."

He never flashed an eye when I so suddenly accused him, but, instead, with all the *sang-froid* of a hardened veteran, he countered my thrust by saying:

"The Major must be suffering from the heat if he believes that! I am Lieutenant Jenkins, under orders to proceed to the United States. As I have my packing to do, I would appreciate it if he would permit me to return to my hotel." And the young rascal arose, as if that statement of his settled it.

"Curlin," I ordered, turning to the sergeant who had been an amused onlooker during the encounter, "take this man to Major Sherburne

at the Casino and tell him to confine him in a private room until I can further investigate the case. I will be at the Casino in two hours."

Curlin, taking him by the arm, led Corporal Magee outside and called a motor car and took him to the Casino as ordered. All the while the corporal was vehemently protesting against the additional outrage about to be heaped upon him and breathing dire threats as to what would happen to me for ordering him into close arrest.

Determined as I was to get his true story, I could but admire the cool nerve of the chap, boy that he was. I had an alternative to aid me in solving his identity.

I could place him under arrest and send to the front for one of the officers of Company C to come to Bordeaux for the purpose of identifying him, if he were Magee. This, however, would entail quite a delay, and if, by chance, he turned out to be Jenkins, as he maintained, I would be in rather an embarrassing position.

Or I could check up his knowledge of aviation —and this seemed by far the more expedient method to adopt. If he were Magee, I could quickly ensnare him.

Fortunately for the success of the second plan I had at my command a skilled aviation officer who had been "shattered" at the front. This officer, who had been with the French flyers before we went into the conflict, had been shot down shortly after his transfer to the American Army. He had then lost his nerve as a flyer and in consequence had been transferred to the Provost Marshal's Department. On this man I placed my dependence in solving this puzzling case.

"Find Lieutenant Blanchard and have him report to me at once," I instructed the orderly who answered my call.

As Blanchard was on duty, it was not very long before I was explaining the entire case to him.

"I'll tell you what to do, Major," he suggested. "I'll post you on a few of the more salient points of the game, and then you can question him while I keep in the background to guide you."

For the next hour or two I studied aviation intensively—I wanted to convince myself that my identification was the correct one, still admitting that his effrontery had raised a question of doubt in my mind. This I was anxious to have settled

right away, the more so because the steamer was to sail on the following morning.

Upon my arrival at the Casino I discovered that although Major Sherburne had confined the man as I had ordered, he did not approve of my attitude toward his prisoner. "I did as you ordered, Major," he began, "but you have made a mistake. I've been talking to the lieutenant and I'm convinced that he is Jenkins, and not Magee, as you assert."

It was evident from the major's assertions that the prisoner had lost no time in trying to win friends for himself. He must have worked fast, because the major had handled men long enough not to be readily fooled.

It behooved us to work fast, also.

A room on the second floor of the officers' quarters was selected as a suitable place in which to stage our test. Here, with the assistance of both Sherburne and Blanchard, I arranged the settings for our little drama. First, a chair was placed so that any one sitting in it would have to face the strong light pouring in from the window, then a second chair was placed with its back to the same window, while yet a third chair was

placed about ten feet behind the first. The first and the third chairs were so placed that whoever occupied them would be forced to face the one sitting in the second chair.

As soon as everything was in readiness I took my seat in the second chair. Then the prisoner was brought in. I ordered the man to sit in the chair nearest to me. This arrangement placed him where the light fell directly upon his face so that I could see every expression flashing over it, while my face was in the shadow. After the prisoner had taken his seat, Lieutenant Blanchard slipped quietly into the room and occupied the third chair.

"Now, Magee, or Jenkins, if you prefer to keep up the farce," I began, "I have a few questions that I wish to ask you:

"Where did you learn to fly?"

"At Toulon."

"How long did it take you to learn to fly?"

"Three weeks," he declared, without the quiver of an eyelash.

That was error number one—it requires a much longer time than three weeks before a man is trusted aloft with a plane.

"What kind of a machine did you fly?"

"A spad."

"That's a three-seated bomber, isn't it?" I naïvely asked.

Again there was no hesitation in his answer, for hardly had I finished my question before his, "Yes," flashed back.

Score number two for me—there is no such a machine as a three-seated spad.

"Ah, yes! that's the machine that has three planes and two engines fixed out on the tips of the wings, isn't it?" I intimated, eagerly leaning forward to catch his reply. If he knew anything at all about flying, he would quickly see the absurdity of that question.

"Sure, that's right! They have the engines out on the wings."

This last answer convinced me that I was right. I had not misjudged him—he had never been an aviator.

Casually, I glanced back toward Blanchard. Catching my glance, he turned both thumbs down. That convinced me that he agreed with me that the man before me was an impostor.

"Now as a matter of fact, young man," I sud-

denly snapped at him, "you have lied three distinct times in answering my questions! You may take your choice: Come clean and tell me the truth or else remain in close confinement until I can bring your company commander down here from the front, I don't care which! There is one thing sure, however, the *Rochambeau* will sail to-morrow without you!"

For one long minute there was a battle of wills as we looked each other straight in the eye. Then, with a boyish grin spreading over his face, he surrendered.

"You have me dead to rights, Major! I'm Magee. But I've had a lot of fun out of it while it lasted."

"Fine! Now you can come up to this table and give me a detailed report covering your wanderings since you left your company," I ordered.

"I was arrested and tried by a General-Court-Martial for showing the white feather the first time I went into action," he said. "The court gave me three years and said I was lucky that it did not order me shot. (Please remember that it was a new and terrible experience to me.) I felt that I was not given a square deal—that the

punishment was unjust. I was willing to fight, and wanted to, but something in my make-up held me back. Before the sentence was confirmed my company was ordered to the front line again. My captain took me back in instead of leaving me behind as he should have done. Just before the outfit went over the top, he came to see me and told me he was going to give me a chance to redeem myself. If I would go over with the rest, he would have my record cleared. In case I were killed, he would see that no one knew of my disgrace. I promised to go over and do the best I could—and so I went over with the rest.

"If you've been over the top, Major, you know the Hell of it all. I couldn't make my legs carry me along; I just slumped down in a heap. Before a great while the doctor came along. Discovering me lying there without a wound, he asked me if I had been gassed. That question gave me my cue. I told him that I had, and so he tagged me for the rear. I joined the first lot of wounded and made my way along with the rest to the dressing-station.

"When I got there, again I said, 'Gas,' and was

quickly hustled along the line. The word *gas* passed me through the medical lines until I eventually reached a base hospital. Here I went before a board to be examined for my fitness for duty. They discovered that I was an expert stenographer, and since there was a great need for one in the office of that hospital, they did not push me too hard about how I had been injured, but, instead, they quickly detailed me to fill the vacancy. The colonel who was in charge of the hospital had never seen army papers until he reached France; consequently, when he found out that I knew all about them, he turned them all over to me to take care of.

"At this hospital I thought that I had found my niche; and but for an unforeseen temptation I would probably have remained there until the end of the war. Here, there was a board of medical officers that had the authority to decide on the final disposal of all officers and soldiers who passed through the hospital for treatment. If they classified a man as A, he went back to the front; if as B, he was sent elsewhere for treatment. If a man drew a C, he went to the Service of Supply for light duty; but if he were

lucky enough to draw a D, he was furnished with transportation and sent home. It was my task to write these various orders for the colonel to sign, and to see that the men received their proper credentials. On some days I would have forty or fifty orders to prepare. When I finished copying them, I would arrange them on the colonel's desk, placing one on top of the other, and leaving just enough of the bottom exposed for the Old Man's signature and his official stamp.

"He was a trusting old chap, was the colonel! For, with the exception of the official stamp, which he never allowed out of his hands, he took my word that everything was all right. He would sign the orders and then, taking the stamp out of his pocket, he would affix the seal to them all.

"It was very simple. One day, in a spirit of daring, I wrote an order for myself, as Lieutenant Jenkins, to proceed to the United States as an aviation instructor. This I slipped in among the many others for the colonel to sign.

"Just as I expected, he signed it without reading it. Then he stamped them all.

"That night I disappeared. A convenient train carried me into Paris and left me well on the road to new adventures. So far my scheme had been successful. I was now Lieutenant Jenkins, but I couldn't move around Paris very much while still dressed in an enlisted man's uniform. Neither could I present my orders until I was dressed for the part; and so I had to scout around to find some one to finance me. I was at my wits' ends about getting out of the predicament in which I found myself when I met an American woman who seemed to have more money than sound sense. My pitiful tale of having been shot down by the Boche and losing all my clothes opened wide her pocketbook to the amount of two hundred dollars, which she loaned me to outfit myself.

"With that sum safe in my pocket, I went out in search of a tailor who could fix me up at short notice. In three days I ventured about as a full-fledged first-lieutenant of aviation with the spread-wings of a pilot proudly displayed on my left breast. For the next few days I loafed around the cafés of Paris, undecided about my next move. Up to this time I had no definite

plans about what I should do with my orders. Then it occurred to me that the way to reach the States was wide open for me if I had the courage to travel it. So I boldly presented myself at the headquarters in Paris and asked for transportation home. Here no questions were asked. And inside of two hours my faked orders had been replaced by official ones signed by the commanding general of Paris. The new ones ordered me to return home, via Tours and Bordeaux.

"It was too late now to turn back, even if I had wanted to. Corporal Magee had disappeared off the face of the earth and in his stead had arisen First Lieutenant Jenkins of the flying corps. In talking with an officer whom I met in Paris, I mentioned the fact that I was short of funds. I explained that I had just been commissioned and did not know how to make out a pay-voucher. He seemed only too glad to show me how, even going so far as to secure a voucher and make it out for me—it was all dead easy! After I had the first one, I studied it. Then, keeping it as a model, I made out one for two months' pay.

"Again I was taken at my face value. No one

seemed to question my being other than I claimed to be, a lieutenant of the flying corps. And the quartermaster at once handed over the money to me."

What a daring story it was, I thought, as I listened to Magee—and amusing, too! He continued:

"Fearing that if I remained around Paris much longer I would be picked up by the military police, I boarded the train for Tours—no more riding in the box cars for me. No, indeed! I secured a seat in the first-class coach and reached Tours in comfort that same night. To carry on the deception I put up at the officers' club there. The next morning I marched up to the headquarters and presented my orders. Again there were no questions, only the routine reading of the orders and the stamping of them, and then I was free to pass through the military police cordon whenever I was ready.

"I remained around Tours for a few days to enjoy myself before moving on. I needed more money. Remembering how easy it had been in Paris to put one over on the quartermaster, I tried it on the one at Tours. My signature on

the pay-voucher was sufficient. Again I was in funds.

"Now fully committed to the task of getting out of France, I once more moved on, this time to Bordeaux. My orders by now were so covered with endorsements and stamps that no one ventured to question them. And those officers whom I met looked upon me with envy when they heard that I was homeward bound.

"I reached Bordeaux last Friday night, presented my orders yesterday, was assigned accommodations on the *Rochambeau,* and expected to sail at six A. M. to-morrow morning. And then I made my first, last, and only mistake.

"I thought that I had eluded the final person.

"I intended to go directly home after I reached New York, and, wishing to make an impression on my friends, fool that I was, I decorated myself with all the medals that I could lay my hands on. Those medals were my undoing. I fell into the hands of the Provost Marshal. That's all."

If I could conscientiously have done so, I am sure, after listening to Magee's tale, that I would have permitted him to carry out the deception, if for no other reason than to see how far he

could go with it. It seemed a pity to lock up one at once so cool and clever; but there was no help for it.

"Well, young man! Inasmuch as you killed Magee to make Lieutenant Jenkins," I said, handing him my knife, "suppose you now cut off all those decorations and the lieutenant's bars and once more restore Corporal Magee to life."

. . . . . .

In the usual routine of our office Magee was once more turned over to his company commander and taken back through France to face an additional court-martial for his last escapade.

Every once in a while as the thought of Magee entered my mind I would chuckle and wonder what new deviltry he was up to, even if in prison. It did not seem possible to me that any prison could hold such a versatile youngster. I promised myself that if ever the opportunity offered I would look him up to see how he was getting along. Fate was against me, however, and I left France in the dark as to how he came out of it.

In 1919, I had business that called me to a

small city in the Northwest. After completing it, my client suggested that I accompany him to a luncheon that the people of the town were giving to one of their young men who was just back from France.

"The young man," explained my companion, as we walked toward the hotel, "is going to tell us all about his experiences overseas."

I had heard war speeches without end, but I went along. One of the first men to whom I was introduced was the returned hero, who was none other than Corporal Magee. Here was the rascal bobbing up again! This time to pose as a hero with experiences to tell his townspeople—exploits would fit his case better, I thought. My questions brought forth the fact that he had acquired in some way an honourable discharge from the army, but I did not secure the particulars. When I asked him how he had managed to escape punishment and had succeeded in securing his discharge, he merely closed his eye with a most expressive wink.

# THE ATTEMPT AGAINST THE *LEVIATHAN*

NOTE—The author does not vouch for the truth of this story. He has repeated it as it was given to him. From many different sources, however, there has come information which tends to confirm the story as true. Yet the Navy Department has repeatedly denied that any such an attempt was made. However, even in the face of these denials the rumours still persist that the Germans did attempt the destruction of the *Leviathan* while she was engaged in transporting American soldiers to France.

"THERE'S a sight to make any man feel proud that he's an American," remarked my friend Jackson, pointing toward the mighty *Leviathan* passing down the river. "But the Germans gave us many an uneasy hour over her before she was finally placed in the transport service. No doubt the sight of her sailing under the Stars and Stripes will give some of our German-Americans a jolt!" he concluded, with a snap of his square jaws.

Jackson was right. It was, indeed, a sight to make one's blood tingle as the *Leviathan* carefully threaded in and out among the river-craft on her way to the ocean.

A large American flag proudly floated from her stern; her rails were jammed with passengers indiscriminately waving farewells to those on shore; her band was trying its best to make itself heard above the continuous din of the countless whistles saluting her; while she herself steamed majestically on her first trip as an American liner.

The throngs lining the Battery seemed to catch the significance of the occasion, for they, too, in various ways joined in wishing this giant mistress of the seas a safe voyage. It was evident, however, that there were a few among the watching crowds whose thoughts were far from joyous as they recalled other days when this same ship, under the German flag, arrogantly shouldered her way out to sea, for here and there could be seen a face that instead of a smile carried a black scowl of disappointment.

Turning to my friend, Jackson, I was about to make some remark about those scowling faces, but my words died on my lips, killed by the expression of his face while he stood gazing out across the bay toward the fast-disappearing steamer. Although he was looking in her di-

rection, he did not see her. His eyes had that far-away, fixed stare one notes in a person who has for the moment turned back the pages of life and is once again living through some of the exciting experiences of the past. His jaws were rigid; his face was tense and livid; his breath fairly whistled through his dilated nostrils; while his hands spasmodically opened and closed as if he had some enemy by the throat and was slowly choking out the life of the one before him. It was a new Jackson I saw beside me and one whom I would have hesitated to arouse. I knew that he had been attached to the Naval Secret Service during the war and had had the misfortune to be kept on duty in the "States." Many a pleasant evening had I spent in his company exchanging experiences, but never in any exchange of confidences had I ever seen my friend in such a passion.

Finally he relaxed enough to motion toward a vacant park bench and, with a nod of his head, indicated that he wanted me to sit beside him. In silence we sat down—Jackson, still absorbed in the visions of the past which the *Leviathan* had conjured up, and I, content to await the mo-

ment when the mood would pass and he would tell me what had disturbed him so deeply.

At last he broke the silence which was fast becoming painful and, turning to me, demanded: "Did you see those faces with their ugly looks as the ship passed?"

"To be sure I did, old man. But why allow a few disgruntled German sympathizers to upset you so?" I soothingly replied.

"I can't help it," was his rejoinder, "when I realize how near some of those same scoundrels came not only to sinking that wonderful ship but also, at the same time, to sending thousands of our soldiers to a watery grave. God! But it was a narrow escape! Those of us who had the protecting of the ship will never forget it, either. It's one of the stories that I have never told you. Come and have dinner with me to-night and I'll tell you about it. It was one of the closest calls and one of the most devilish plots of the entire war, in my estimation."

Over our pipes in Jackson's apartment, that same night, I heard the story. It sounded like a wild dream of fiction; but Jackson was too earnest and his facts too straight to make that

possible. Only the location and the names have been changed in the relating.

"When we took over Germany's interned ships at the time we went into the war, we learned that the German crews knew long before we did that the United States would eventually be drawn into the conflict," began Jackson. "While we had been permitting those crews the run of the ship, they had been systematically destroying the important parts of the machinery. The thoroughness with which they succeeded proved that the work had not been done in a few days —it had been too thorough for that. It had required weeks and weeks of careful and almost endless work to accomplish the destruction on the *Leviathan* alone. However, in this, as in other instances, the Germans had underrated our ability to make the necessary repairs; consequently, what to them had seemed complete destruction required but a few months' work for us to make as good as new again. When they learned that all their efforts had been in vain, these enemy-aliens determined to prevent the boats from sailing at any cost.

"The *Leviathan,* because she could carry thou-

sands of troops and make the passage so quickly, was especially singled out for attack. The first attempts did not do credit either to the ability of the Germans or to their estimate of judgment, and were quickly counteracted by us until the attempts seemed to cease altogether. It looked to us who were watching as if they had finally given up the task as impossible. But just when we were congratulating ourselves upon our success in this regard, our Secret Service in Mexico warned us that orders had been forwarded to the German spies in that country to sink that ship at all hazards. They also told us that a German naval officer had in some way slipped across the border and was even then on his way north either to blow up the boat or die in the attempt.

"Our guards were doubled, and every precaution was taken not only to protect the boat but also to apprehend the officer himself, should he put in an appearance. Days passed. Meanwhile the crew struggled to get the boat in readiness for the sea. A close watch was kept on any stranger either lurking around the docks or joining the workmen. But no one appeared who could possibly be classified as dangerous. In

consequence, we were led to believe that our precautions had frightened away any one who might have had evil designs against the ship.

"But"—and again that mysterious look came into my friend's eyes—"we little knew in the early days of the war just how persistent and resourceful the German Secret Service was in this country until, out of a clear sky, the storm broke.

"At about the time we received the warning from Mexico there appeared at a certain hotel in the Back Bay district of Boston a dignified-appearing man who registered under the name of Robert Morris, of Chicago. Morris said he was, and he appeared to be, a retired banker well blessed with this world's goods, and while not lavish with his money, he was quick to reward any service. He informed the manager of the hotel that his only son was in the army and would be attached to the Department of the Northeast, in Boston. In order to be near him he had decided to make his home in the city. This hotel had been recommended to him by a friend.

"The manager, all eagerness to please, showed him all the best suites. Morris finally selected

one on the top floor overlooking both the city and the harbour. Then came a most unusual request: Morris said he would lease the suite for a year provided the manager would permit him to install a metal ceiling. He gave as a reason for this extraordinary request his fear of plaster ceilings, since one had once fallen on him when he was asleep, blinding him for several weeks. Morris assured the manager, who showed some hesitation, that of course he intended to pay for the installation himself.

"On the face of it, it at least warranted reporting; but that dolt of a manager, when he found that the guest would pay all the bills, promptly gave his permission and as promptly let it pass from his mind. If only he had told someone about the little matter of the ceiling at the time, our work would have been simplified a thousand-fold. But no! He never thought it of any importance, he told us when we finally learned about the transaction.

"This Robert Morris had his own mechanics come in and put up the metal ceiling, after which he moved in with his trunks and a large packing-case. Within four days from the time he had

established himself in the hotel, our wireless operators at the naval radio station at the Charlestown Navy Yard began to pick up a new sound out of the air. For some time they supposed it was static, as night after night this strange buzzing sound came in over the instruments, but because it was merely a jumble, they cursed it and tried to tune it out.

"One operator, of a more inquisitive turn of mind, eventually succeeded in localizing the wave. He found that, instead of being static, it was a very high-frequency and high-powered radio set in active operation, and so reported his discovery to us. I was sent on to investigate it. We had a wireless direction-finder in our equipment, but for some reason we could not localize the direction beyond the general one of the Back Bay district of Boston. We combed that district with a fine-toothed comb, but to no avail—we could not locate the station.

"The operator who had been successful in determining that it was radio rather than static stuck to his task and eventually dug out of the jumble a message. For five consecutive nights we sat huddled in the wireless room watching

that operator copy down the message, and each night the message was the same.

"Imagine our consternation when we had succeeded in decoding it, only to learn that it said:

Arrangements have been completed to sink the *one* ship.

"All we had to do was to substitute the word *Leviathan* for the word *one* and we had solved it. Just what the *arrangements* were was as much of a mystery to us as was the location of the sending station.

"The knowledge that the Germans, far from being discouraged with their previous attempts at the destruction of the ship, had now completed their plans to put her out of commission, spurred us on to greater efforts. Our next step was to cover the telephone lines leading into the city. Arrangements were made and the proper personnel installed in order that every long-distance telephone message coming into the city of Boston could be routed through a listening station. Here, stenographers sat with the telephone receivers clamped to their ears while they copied down every word that was said. Reliefs were frequent, so that the notes could be transcribed

and turned over to the man in charge. Calls to reputable business houses were quickly discarded; only those for private individuals were retained and studied. It did not take us long, however, to discover that a certain Robert Morris, living at a Back Bay hotel, was receiving daily calls from various pay stations in New York City. The messages themselves seemed harmless enough; yet it did seem strange that any one would be spending so much money to call up this man merely to inquire about his health. Then we got him.

"One night one of our girls, all excited, burst into the room. 'Read that!' she exclaimed.

" 'Our next messenger sails in three days,' the transcribed message read. 'Have you anything to transmit?'

"And the reply was, 'Yes, I mailed it to-day.'

"That message could mean only one thing—that German spies in this country were in some way sending out their reports by a secret messenger. If we could check up on all the boats sailing within the next three days, we might by a careful search of the passengers catch the messenger red-handed. A telephone call to the

officer of the Port of New York gave us the information that the only ships sailing were troop ships. It was now evident that our quarry must be among the sailors or soldiers on those ships.

"Our suspicions were communicated to the War Department, which ordered a kit inspection just before the soldiers entrained for the transports. Again our efforts resulted in failure. As careful as those army officers were, they could not find a thing that was in the least suspicious.

"Our last, and to me a most forlorn chance was to scrutinize carefully every man as he passed up the gangplank, in the hope that in some way the culprit would give himself away. At every gangway we placed a naval secret service officer, while the army, equally anxious to assist, stood by with their secret service men to aid us if the necessity arose.

"About two thirds of the men had passed aboard when a soldier came along who walked as if badly chafed. As none of the troops had marched far enough to become chafed, we at once yanked him out of the line—it was a long chance for us, but a lucky one. We hustled our

prisoner across the docks and into a small shanty and quickly stripped him.

"Tucked away in various parts of that soldier's body we found small cylindrical rolls of tissue paper about two inches long and tightly rolled to the thickness of a small lead pencil. Every roll had been carefully sealed in oiled silk to keep out the moisture, and surgeon's tape had been used to hold the rolls in place. *Our prisoner was literally a walking despatch-case.*

"You may imagine how overjoyed we were to get our hands on those messages and how eagerly we scanned them for information. They were, as we soon discovered, written in the secret code of the German Navy and might equally as well have been written in the English language—*Boy-Ed had improvidently lost his code-books just before he sailed.* One, in particular, interested us very much because in it we read the confirmation of our radio messages that all arrangements had been made to sink the *Leviathan* on her first outward bound voyage. They had neglected, however, to tell in them how they proposed to do it. But we had learned enough to put us on the right trail. Nor was it long

before we had Robert Morris under close surveillance.

"The reading of those messages removed the last vestige of doubt from our minds about Morris's being a German spy. The only question now confronting us was what we were going to do about it. Several of the hot-headed ones were eager to arrest him at once and put him where he could do no more damage; but not so our far-seeing chief. He pointed out that even if we had Morris behind the bars, it would not help us in learning what the plans of the Germans were in reference to the boat, or who was to turn the trick. Furthermore, the arrest of Morris at this time would serve only as a warning to the rest that we were on their trail. It was a most peculiar predicament, to say the least. On the one hand we knew that Morris was a spy; on the other hand, even with this knowledge in our possession, we could not use it unless we chanced losing the major part of our case, which was to learn who the others were. And so one German spy was permitted to enjoy his freedom, even after we had evidence enough to convict him.

"The chief decided that as long as we could

not arrest this Morris, we at least could keep him under close surveillance until such time as we were ready to pick him up. Then again, if we allowed him his freedom, there was the possibility that he would lead us to the others, and then we would have them all. This decision made, the next one was to decide who was to be assigned to the case. Each one insisted that he should be the one to shadow Morris, but again the chief interfered to settle the argument.

"Billy Mason and I were the ones lucky enough to draw the assignment. We lost no time, either, in getting to our task. The very next day we presented ourselves at the Back Bay hotel and asked for work as waiters. Billy succeeded in the quest, while I was forced to be content with a dish-washing job.

"We were on a delicate assignment and we had to work cautiously; yet, at the same time, we could ill afford to allow the case to drag, since the ship was fast nearing the point where she would be ready for sea. Furthermore, the army was very anxious to load her with troops and get her away. It was now becoming a question of days.

"As soon as possible without exciting suspicion

we made a survey of the hotel and located Morris on the top floor. The spy, however, was keeping close to his rooms, even going to the extreme of having his meals served there by one waiter. There was no way so far as we could see that Morris could have learned of the arrest of the messenger, yet for some reason that man stuck close to his quarters all of the time. If ever he went out for a walk, it was either while we were asleep or busy with other duties. It required some manœuvring on the part of Billy before he could manage to get his chance to serve a meal in that particular suite, but he finally secured it. He whispered the good news to me as he passed out with his tray of food. I have here a copy of Billy's report of his first visit to that room. Wait a moment until I get it and I will read it to you."

Jackson, suiting the action to the word, started rummaging around in his old battered locker.

"'I was detailed to carry the suspect's dinner up to him,'" read Jackson, after we had once more settled back in our chairs. "'When I reached the top floor I rapped on the door, only to have it opened on a chain, while the suspect

peered around the jamb to see who was there. When he saw it was only a waiter, he unhooked the chain and bade me enter. The room I first entered was his reception room. Here I saw nothing suspicious. When I glanced around to find the table Morris informed me that it was in the bedroom. Placing my tray on a chair, I went into the bedroom to get it, with the suspect all the while close at my heels. I had no chance for more than a quick survey of that room, but I saw enough. As for the furnishings, the room was but a duplicate of hundreds of other hotel bedrooms. On the side next to the window, however, I saw an exceedingly large trunk, and close beside it on the baggage-stand was a packing-case as large as the trunk itself. Two huge straps with locks equally as large effectually shut off any inquisitive person from the contents of the case, while the locks securing the trunk would have made many a country banker proud to own them.

" 'While returning with the table, I had an opportunity to study my man at close range. The fellow had Germany written all over him, from his highly polished boots to his stubby

beard and short, bristling, iron-gray hair. He was a man of about sixty years of age, a little above the average in height, well-proportioned, and being of erect carriage, he looked every inch the officer. His actions, also, gave me the same impression as with a curt nod of his head he indicated just where he wanted the table placed. When I started to serve the meal, I obtained a good look at his right cheek. There, hidden from the casual observer by his beard, I saw the telltale Heidelberg duelling-scar. I knew, then, that our suspicions were correct. As soon as I had placed the food on the table he dismissed me with the admonition that the other waiter must serve him in the future.'

"As soon as Billy could reach me," continued Jackson, again picking up the thread of the story, "he told me of his visit to the rooms and what he had found out. From then on, one or both of us were hovering around that suite as often as we could get off duty. I suppose we might have taken the manager into our confidence, but we were not too sure of his attitude and so we took no chances of having any one spoil our little game.

"For several nights after Billy had made his visit to Morris, nothing out of the way occurred to uphold our suspicions; but on the fourth night, while we were hidden in a closet under the stairs leading to the roof, I was startled by Billy's suddenly grabbing my arm with a whispered:

" 'Can you hear it, too?'

" 'Hear what?' I demanded, wondering whether the excitement of the chase had turned his head.

" 'The purring of that dynamo and the hiss of a radio spark.'

"To me the sound meant nothing; but to him, skilled as he was in radio, it spoke volumes. Our man was at it again, sending out radio messages to some distant receiving station. After Billy had called my attention to the sounds I, too, could hear them. For hours we remained huddled there in that closet, trying to decipher the message; but the spy had the sounds too well deadened for our ears to pick up. It was getting late, and so after a time Morris quit, for we saw his lights extinguished. Tired, and stiff from our cramped position, we then slipped off to our room, satisfied that at last we had solved the mystery of that strange radio station, though

still puzzled as to how Morris managed the affair without being caught.

"Our report to the chief brought forth a warning to be on the jump, since the *Leviathan* was about ready for sea. In fact, she was to sail on the next Saturday night. If we were to be successful in solving the case, we must not delay, with Saturday night only three nights away.

"The tension in our department was extreme as the time drew near. There was no one there who doubted that the Germans had told the truth in those messages nor that, as far as they were concerned, all the plans had been made to send the ship to the bottom of the ocean on her first outward-bound voyage. Meanwhile, we were still in the dark as to how they intended to accomplish it.

"Saturday morning found us both hollow-eyed from lack of sleep, after having watched that suite all night without result. We were still desperately groping around for a clue that would give us the solution of the mystery. Billy, all impatient, had finished serving his guests their breakfast and had disappeared long before I had completed my work. I hurried through the

dishes, too, so that I could once more join him in the hunt. Upon going to the room we share, I was surprised and dismayed to see that he, contrary to his usual custom, had not waited for me, but was out playing a lone hand.

"Luncheon passed, and no Billy; but when dinner time came and he was still absent and had sent no word to me of his whereabouts, I was impressed that something out of the ordinary had occurred. In desperation, as I saw the minutes slipping by with the boy still absent, I called the manager. To him I disclosed my real identity, and asked for help. He hadn't seen Billy since he had served the breakfasts and had passed upstairs toward our room, he said. When I asked about Morris, he told me that the fellow had gone out shortly after Billy had gone upstairs and had not yet returned. He also volunteered the information that Morris, for the first time, had his son with him. Fully awake now to a realization that something was radically amiss, I told him to get his pass-key and meet me at the top suite. I was sure that the answer to Billy's strange disappearance was to be found in Morris's rooms.

"My judgment was correct. As I neared the door I could hear someone moaning within the room. Not waiting for the manager to come, I took a running jump and crashed in the door as if it were an eggshell. But I did not get beyond the threshold, for there I was staggered by the sight which met my gaze. Over in a corner of the room, moaning, and with a white foam flecking his lips, lay poor Billy. In my excitement, I did not notice that his hands were behind his back, nor was it until I started to pick him up that I saw he had been handcuffed and chained with a light steel chain to the radiator. By now, others had arrived. With assistance we lifted the radiator enough so that we could slip the chain out from underneath it and so get Billy over to the bed. The house doctor, attracted by the noise of the breaking door, had come up, and after a hasty examination he told me that Billy had been given some powerful drug. I at once made the doctor see the necessity of putting Billy in a condition to talk, to which he readily agreed.

"Slowly Billy reacted to the doctor's treatment, and finally I saw his eyes open. He looked

up at me and smiled, and then went off again. Frantically we worked over him, realizing that behind those drug-closed eyelids lay not only our hope of saving the ship, but also the safety of thousands of lives as well.

"I lived an eternity in that room that night, old man, and even now in my dreams I again go through the agony of it all. More than once I have awakened in the middle of the night in a cold perspiration from a dream about it.

"At length we succeeded in arousing Billy to the point where he muttered, 'Stop the *Leviathan* —Lieutenant James is on board.' That was all the boy could get out, but it was sufficient. I hastened to a telephone and ordered Central to give me the private wire which was directly connected with the chief's office in New York. I knew that the girls in the Boston exchange lost no time in making the connection, but to me it seemed as if they would never get it through. If my watch was correct, the *Leviathan* was even then starting to pull up her anchors and, under the cover of darkness, slip out to sea, in very truth bound for the bottom of the ocean, instead of for France as all expected.

"The chief's quiet voice on the other end of the wire acted as a sedative to my strained nerves, while in a voice that I strove to keep calm I told him to stop the *Leviathan,* that the Germans had succeeded in their plots.

"Thank God! I was in time!

"A hurried telephone message to the signal station, a few flashes from the signal lights—and the anchors that had just been lifted from the mud of the harbour were once again dropped overboard.

"As soon as the chief was sure that he had been successful in stopping the boat, he returned to the telephone for further details, which I filled in for him as best I could. Immediately he sent out a squad to arrest Lieutenant James. Twenty minutes more would have been too late!

"Leaving the rest in the chief's hands, I returned to Billy. The doctor assured me that as soon as the effects of the drug had worn off he would be as well as ever. All that was necessary for him was absolute rest and quiet. The doctor having promised to remain with him until all danger had passed, I dropped down on the couch in the reception room to try to snatch a few

minutes' sleep before attempting to make out a report of that night's happenings.

"Early the next morning the chief called me on the telephone. I could tell by the inflection of his voice that he was still worried about Billy. Not only was I able to assure him that our patient was well on the road to complete recovery, but I could also give him the story of the adventure.

"It seemed that our failure to get at the bottom of this plot had so preyed upon Billy that he had determined to take a desperate chance and enter Morris's apartment. He had hoped to find the spy out, but if the worst came to the worst, he intended to force his entrance and, if necessary, choke the truth from Morris. As he stooped down to peer through the keyhole, he did not hear the footsteps of the man who struck him down.

"When he recovered from the blow, he found himself lying on the floor of the reception room, with arms pinioned behind his back by a pair of handcuffs which had been fastened to the radiator by a small steel chain. To prevent his giving an alarm, they had stuffed a towel into his mouth

and had tied another around his head to keep this gag in place.

"Billy saw two men in the room, and the first words that he heard were about himself. One, a young man in the uniform of an American officer, was eager to put him out of the way at once, while the other, whom he recognized as Morris, protested against it. Morris finally prevailed. Then the two, still believing the prisoner unconscious, began to discuss their plans. In answer to a question, the younger man said that he had his orders to proceed to France on the *Leviathan,* that he was travelling under the name of James, and that the machine was in his locker-trunk and all set to go off at the proper time. This man urged Morris to go to New York with him, since their work in Boston was completed.

"Morris at length agreed, but suggested that they give the prisoner a drink to keep him quiet for a few hours. It took but a moment for them to remove the gag, and while the lieutenant held Billy's nose, Morris poured the drug down the victim's throat. 'There was no escape from swallowing it,' Billy told us. Within a few minutes he was dead to the world.

"From the chief I learned the rest of the story: The *Leviathan,* her decks jammed with soldiers, left her dock at 2 P. M. Passing down the river, she came to anchor under the lee of Staten Island, opposite the naval station, there to await an opportune time for the dash across. At about seven o'clock that same evening a man giving the name of *James* called the naval station on the telephone and told the officer-in-charge that he was a lieutenant of infantry and was under orders to proceed to France on the *Leviathan.* He asserted that he had gone to the docks at Hoboken, only to learn that the ship had sailed. The officer-in-charge there had told him that he might get the naval station to put him on board.

"It was out of the ordinary; but inasmuch as the man declared his orders would brook no delay, the naval officer suggested that he come to the station, and that meanwhile he would see what could be done about it. Later on, a taxi drove up to the naval station, and a man dressed in the regular army uniform entered the office. Again he explained his trouble and proffered his orders to substantiate his story. His papers and orders were authentic and they did specify the

*Leviathan.* Accordingly, the naval officer arranged for a boat to place him on board.

"Then came our bombshell.

"The ship was pulling in her anchors when orders were flashed to her to stand by for a boarding party. A dozen men, in charge of the naval officer, went out to the ship and hunted up James and placed him under arrest. That done, they asked him to point out his baggage. Cool to the last was this German spy as he deliberately pointed to another officer's trunk, asserting it was his own. Had it not been for the shrewdness of one of the sailors, the plot would still have been successful. This sailor, sensing that something was wrong, protested that the lieutenant had claimed the wrong trunk and pointed out the right one.

"That trunk was placed on the deck, and from amongst a bunch of keys taken from the lieutenant's pocket one was found that would open the locker. One and all at once stepped back when they saw what the trunk contained—there was enough T. N. T. in it to sink three ships, while in one corner there was a clock-mechanism, ticking away even after the trunk was opened.

"Later on, after James had been brought ashore, he stated, in answer to a question, that the bomb had been timed to go off when the ship was two days at sea. When asked how he expected to escape, he replied:

" 'My life is a small price to forfeit if I can sink such a ship with all on board.' "

"What did you do with him?" I asked.

"Oh, we sent him to Atlanta, that was all."

"What became of Morris?" was my next question.

"We never did capture him. He just dropped out of sight," explained Jackson. "When we raided his rooms, we found that the packing-case and the trunk contained a high-powered radio transmitting set. He had tapped a feed wire on the roof for his power, and no one in the hotel had been the wiser. That metal ceiling which he had put up made a real antenna for his set. Where he is or what happened to him from the time he left that hotel room we never knew. But Billy, at least, owes him something, for had it not been for his intervention James would have finished Billy then and there, we all believed."

# THE MISSING PAYMASTER

## I

"MAJOR, hell's popping upstairs in the general's office! He wants you at once!" breathlessly announced Lieutenant Joslin, the general's aid-de-camp, bursting open the door of my private office.

"What's wrong?" I inquired.

"Colonel Marble and Colonel Brewster are up there having a scrap, and when I left the argument was getting hot and furious. So long! See you on the battlefield. I don't want to miss the first blow." Grinning, he gave me an exaggerated salute and slammed the door.

"What on earth has happened?" I wondered, slipping on my blouse. "The old army must be getting in a bad way when two of her old-line colonels stage a row in the commanding general's office."

The message, in spite of Joslin's levity, impressed me as urgent; and so I lost no time in

questioning myself, but went directly to the second floor. As my head came on a level with the landing above I heard someone say in an undertone:

"Look out! Here comes the P. M.!"

I was just in time to catch a glimpse of the staff officers, majors and captains alike, who were grouped around the closed door, making a hasty retreat to their desks like so many housemaids caught eavesdropping.

As I approached the general's door I was struck by the fact that in all my experiences with him never before had I heard a voice raised in anger in his office. But now the sounds that emanated from within reminded me of the noisy buzzing of a swarm of bees when its hive has been raided.

The wrathful tones convinced me that I should not stand upon the dignity of my entrance. Grasping the handle of the door, I flung it open with a jerk and stepped inside. Giving one glance around the office, I quickly closed the door again, much to the disgust of the interested officers in the outer office.

As I went slowly forward to face the com-

mander the sight that met my gaze was most unusual for a general's office. The old man himself, face flushed and hair tousled, stood behind his desk, his gray head moving this way and that while he tried his best to keep watch of both Colonel Marble and Colonel Brewster.

Separated from him by the desk, on the general's left, at one end, stood Colonel Marble, commanding officer of the Bassens stevedore camp. His face was flushed also, his hands clenched.

Facing him, at the other end of the desk, stood Colonel Brewster, chief quartermaster of the base. Over Colonel Brewster's cold, hard face played one of those maddening, supercilious smiles that on more than one occasion has wrought havoc on the man wearing it. He, too, had his hands clenched as if to repel the attack his whole attitude invited. They reminded me of two children, each one having a chip on his shoulder and daring the other to knock it off.

Over in the corner stood Lieutenant Joslin, enjoying the scene to the fullest.

As I saluted, the argument which had suddenly been interrupted by my entrance broke out again in all its fury.

"General, I tell you it's a damnable lie!" shouted Marble, glaring across the desk at Brewster as if defying him to say otherwise. "Captain Barry never did——"

"Well, then, what's become of both him and the money?" broke in Brewster. "He's gone, hasn't he?"

Before Marble could frame a suitable reply the general spoke.

"Gentlemen, stop this wrangling," he ordered, "or I shall instruct the provost marshal to put you both under arrest. Unless you control yourselves we shall never arrive at the truth of what has happened to Captain Barry."

The general, realizing that the scene was outrageous to a man holding his command, suddenly with a great show of indignation turned to Colonel Marble.

"Colonel, sit down in that chair behind you," he ordered, pointing to the seat which that officer had vacated in his anxiety to defend the good name of his friend and junior officer.

"You, Colonel Brewster, sit down in this one. Now both of you keep quiet."

Then he turned to me.

"Major," he began, with ill-suppressed feeling, his face twitching with the anguish of the admission he was about to make, "Captain Barry has stolen the cash that was drawn for the payroll of the Bassens camp. He has disappeared with more than a million francs."

I knew how hard it must have been for the general to have to acknowledge this, for Captain Barry had been the general's favourite officer—a protégé of his. Soon after his arrival in France as a quartermaster sergeant the general had found him, and for the sake of Barry's mother, who was an old friend of the family, had moved heaven and earth to secure a commission for him, success finally crowning his efforts when Barry was promoted to a captain in the quartermaster corps. This friendship had induced the general to have Barry detailed as finance officer of the Bassens camp. And now, as a reward for all the general's kindness, Barry had disappeared with the entire payroll—and among the officers of our army there is no more contemptible crime than that of stealing.

"Tell me the facts, please, General," I quietly

urged, trying to divert his mind from the angry dispute I had just witnessed.

"All we know is this," he replied, wearily seating himself in his armchair. "Barry came over here yesterday, so Colonel Brewster tells me, and received the funds with which to pay off the troops. For the first time in more than six months he did not bring his pay-guard with him, although he knew that orders forbade an officer's transporting money without a proper guard. From the time he stepped out of the bank with the money stowed away in two handbags, all trace of him has been lost. Not a person can be found who saw him, and not one has been able to give us a clue to his whereabouts. All last night Barry's brother officers, in an attempt to save him from himself, scoured Bordeaux and the surrounding district, but to no purpose. He's gone," concluded the general, bowing his head. Then, like a true soldier, he suddenly straightened and, looking me directly in the eye, commanded:

"Find him, and I will make such an example of him that it will deter any one else from trying the same game."

"What is your opinion, Colonel Marble?" I asked, turning in his direction.

"If Barry was in his right mind he never in his life would steal a penny. There's something wrong. I'll stake my reputation on the man's honesty."

I gave one searching look at Colonel Marble's frank, earnest face, and I knew that he believed exactly what he said.

"And you, Colonel?" I continued, facing about to Colonel Brewster.

"Oh, the explanation is very simple," he said, with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders. "Barry came into my office, received his pay-check, presented it at the bank, withdrew the funds, and, seeing a chance to get away with a fortune, stole the money. He's a dirty crook, to my mind."

The facts, on the face of them, when analyzed, did make it look as if Barry had double-crossed them all and fled with the money. His leaving the guard in the camp, his apparent disappearance off the face of the earth, both tended to prove that he was a thief. Then again, if he had been held up and robbed, or even if he had been

murdered for the money which he carried, undoubtedly someone would have witnessed the assault or at least we should have found some evidence of the crime by now. I could only agree that Brewster's logic was the more convincing.

"It looks to me, General, very much as if Barry were guilty. I'm sorry to have to say it," I owned. "Of course all we have is circumstantial evidence, which at best is not to be depended on unless corroborated. But even so, you may rest assured I'll do what I can to apprehend him before he has a chance to spend all of the money."

On thinking the situation over after returning to my office, I began to doubt that we should catch him very soon, since he already had had a day's start of us.

The work connected with our department was at times very harrowing. The case of Captain Barry was unusually so, not from the standpoint of labour but rather from the fact that Barry was a personal friend of mine. I had been one of the first to greet him when he received his commission. And now——well, if he believed that my friendship would deter me from prose-

cuting a vigorous search for him, he was entirely mistaken. His violation of the trust the general had placed in him would prevent that.

This man's crime was a puzzle to me. Others might commit a theft and have some chance of escaping; I could not understand, however, how a man of Barry's personality and striking appearance could expect to get away with it. Even if he did succeed in disguising his five feet eleven inches, and in some mysterious manner had lightened his dark skin and changed the colour of his jet-black hair, his features and general physical build would uncover him. His erect carriage, his arms which swung disproportionately long from broad, square shoulders, would also work to his disadvantage. But should he further succeed in covering up all this, in addition he had yet another distinguishing mark which of itself was sufficient to single him out from among his fellowmen. His facial characteristics were far different from those of the average man. To a certain degree his face in its general contour resembled that of an ape, not that it was repulsive, but rather that it had a peculiar cast to it. His forehead bulged, so

that his eyes had the appearance of being set far back in his head. He had high cheek bones, and a thick upper lip covering protruding teeth, the eye-teeth longer than the rest. Add to that a pleasing personality and an engaging smile and the picture is complete. All of this would be hard to cover up with any sort of disguise, especially from the sharp eyes of my men.

"Barry must have been either drunk or crazy," was the comment of Lieutenant Joslin, who came down from the general's office to learn what the outcome would be. "He was such a frequent visitor in your office that he should have been familiar with the system. He must have realized how quickly the long arm of the department could reach out and close every avenue of escape once the fact that he was wanted became known."

The first move I made in an endeavour to close in on the fugitive was to get in touch with my various outposts, as I called them. In rapid sequence Hendaye, Pau, Dax, and other frontier towns along the Spanish border were communicated with. A detailed description of the man we wanted was furnished to them. La Cortine, La Rochelle, Limoges, and other inland towns

were called by telephone and warned to be on the lookout. Quickly and with due care a cordon of military police was thrown around the base.

Satisfied that the net had been laid, I next dispatched officers to question and warn the many local military police control stations in Bordeaux itself. I hoped to be able through some of them to pick up a clue that would at least give us an idea of the direction in which the fugitive had left the city—that is, if he had tried to escape. I knew that if he had not been observed passing out on any of the roads, then our search was narrowed to the city itself.

Our inquiries, notwithstanding this, gave us no assistance until the corporal in charge of the guard posted on the Bassens bridge was interviewed.

"Sure, I know Captain Barry," the corporal informed us. "He went over the bridge twice yesterday—once going into the city and again coming out." If the corporal were correct, then Barry had started back for his camp before the temptation to steal the money had overwhelmed him. Here, at least, was a definite clue that should lead us somewhere.

As soon as the corporal's report was given to me I ordered our searching parties to cover the roads that diverged from the bridge.

"Cover every house, store, and café between the bridge and the camp," were the instructions. The captain spent his entire time between those two points. Somewhere along the line you will find a trace of him."

We had our trouble for our pains, however. The only incident of the entire search was the discovery that one of the cafés which had usually been open was then closed.

Our search of the roads having got us nothing, I next determined to learn as much as I could of Barry's personal history. I was especially interested in that part of it which had followed his arrival in France. In many instances if the past record of a criminal can be learned it is not difficult to ascertain the motive behind the crime and to plan a method of capture. There was only one place where this information could be obtained, and that was from Barry's fellow officers in the camp. Not for a moment doubting that they would be glad to assist me, I presented myself at Colonel Marble's office.

"Colonel," I announced, "I should like to interview all the officers who have been associated with Captain Barry. Will you have them come in, one at a time, please?"

I should have been warned by Colonel Marble's manner that there was a plot on foot to defeat my purpose, but such a thing I did not for a moment suspect. As the various interviews progressed I was perplexed at the attitude of these men. To all outward appearances they seemed willing to assist me in every way. Each and every one was ready to assure me I was wrong when I accused Barry of stealing the money and could furnish numerous reasons why. Nevertheless, I sensed hostility to every question of mine concerned with the intimate life of their fellow officer. All such questions were met with the same reply:

"I don't know."

If the statements which these officers made to me were to be taken at their full value, Barry was a paragon of virtue and, as far as I could learn, did not have a diversion in life outside of his work. Neither did he have a friend, aside from the officers in the camp, and never did he

leave the camp alone or go out on any parties.

"The captain spent his entire time between his office and his quarters," one lieutenant went so far as to assure me.

The very similarity of their statements convinced me that I should not take them too seriously. The evidence of collusion was too great. I was provoked at their believing that they could so easily fool me; yet, at the same time, I could not but admire their apparent loyalty to the one for whom we were searching as we would search for a common thief.

"Very well. If you chaps won't assist me, I'll secure help from the enlisted men who worked with him in his office," I declared to myself, as I passed out through the door on my way across the street to the camp finance office.

Again I was met with the same kind of carefully planned opposition. "No, we know nothing about the captain's personal affairs," was the sum and substance of every answer given by the enlisted men to our questions.

Checkmated here, I next turned my attention to Barry's desk. Possibly among his personal papers I might find something that would be of

help. But the search was useless. It was all too evident to me that Barry's papers had been carefully prepared against the time when I should want to look them over.

This evidence of the precaution with which every attempt to secure information was blocked convinced me that some of the officers, at least, were in a conspiracy to keep me from learning the truth about Barry's personal affairs. There now remained only one way for me to secure this information. I did not hesitate to employ it. I appealed to the general, telling him of the situation. "I want to send one of my officers over there under cover," I said. "Will you please detail Captain Reynolds as finance officer of the camp?"

And so it was that Captain Reynolds, whom I had requested be sent from Tours for the purpose, appeared at Bassens with the necessary orders assigning him to the post of finance officer.

The other officers, from the very start suspicious of this new arrival, were careful about what they said when he was around. We urged Reynolds not to try to force himself into their confi-

dence, considering that we could afford to await the time when, no longer suspicious, they would by degrees begin to relax their vigilance.

In less than a week Reynolds had established himself in their good graces. Then, little by little, he began to pick up enough fragments of conversation to convince me I had been justified in assuming that a conspiracy did exist. The first fragment came one night at mess when Reynolds overheard one of the officers say, following a mention of Barry's name, "I saw Jeanette today. She looked ill. It's a great pity."

This was not much of a clue, you will agree, but we grasped at it with the eagerness of a drowning man clutching a twig. Jeanette is not an uncommon name in France, yet I determined, if it became necessary, to interview every Jeanette in Bordeaux until I found the right one. To carry out my determination in this, I approached my friend the French chief, knowing that since he had the records of every civilian in the city it would only mean copying the names and sending out enough investigators to cover each one of them. Fortunately I was spared the necessity for doing this, because while we were preparing

the list, Reynolds came to me with the information that he had again heard the name *Jeanette* used.

"I overheard Captain Bond tell Colonel Marble that Jeanette was worried ill over the strange disappearance of Captain Barry," he reported. "Captain Bond had promised to call upon her tomorrow evening and tell her the latest news about Barry."

This was luck, indeed! No more need we worry about the hundreds of Jeanettes scattered throughout the city of Bordeaux. Instead we would permit Captain Bond to lead us to the only one in whom we were at the moment interested.

When Captain Bond crossed the Bassens bridge the next night he had to pass around two very disreputable-looking longshoremen who—if he knew French—he heard arguing about the relative values of certain wines. Just as he stepped by them they seemed to decide that they, too, would go over into the city. With the captain in the lead, hurrying along to keep his appointment and the two following on behind at a more moderate pace, the procession of three

made its way through the heart of the city. Not once, until Captain Bond arrived at his destination, did the two lose sight of him—they were two of my best shadow men.

"It was easy for us," reported one of them. "He didn't look back even once. The girl lives at 25 Rue de Lafayette."

Up to this point I had not called on the French. Even when I asked for the list of the persons in Bordeaux by the name of *Jeanette,* I did not tell my friend why I wanted them. But if I were to have a successful interview with this girl, I needed at least the moral support of the local French officials.

"You are wrong in your suspicions, my friend," was the chief's comment on my story. "The family of *mademoiselle* is highly respected and her father is one of the largest merchants in the city. But, of course, if you wish to ask her some questions, I will gladly accompany you."

Next morning the two of us presented ourselves at Jeanette's home. Here, again, I faced the desire to shield the missing man. Jeanette either did not know anything that would help me or else she was a finished actress. For about an

hour both the French chief and I plied her with questions about Captain Barry and her friendship with him, without result. We could not develop a clue that would be of the slightest assistance to us.

"Really, *monsieur,*" she at length protested, "I know nothing whatever of the present whereabouts of Captain Barry. I only know that he was to have taken dinner with us the night he disappeared. I know Captain Barry—" and here her eyes, which heretofore had shone so brightly, suddenly filled with tears—"I *know* he is innocent of any wrongdoing. He was too honourable a man to have stolen from his government. You must excuse me, but this interview is becoming painful to me." And with head held high she passed from the room.

I knew that our questions had been a strain upon Jeanette, but just how great a strain I was not to know until later.

"Maybe Jeanette is right," I mused. Almost everyone with whom I had come in contact on this case fully believed in the integrity of the captain. In my estimation he was either a much-maligned man or else a consummate crook.

Back again in my office, after going over in my mind the interview with the girl I had just left, I had to acknowledge that she seemed sincere enough. Nevertheless, she might be shielding the culprit. Then the picture of Jeanette's tasteful home and the reputation that her father enjoyed in Bordeaux would intrude upon my thoughts and my feelings would sway again.

The stakes were so high, however, that I did not dare allow my personal feelings to bias my judgment. Accordingly, I decided that Mademoiselle Jeanette should enjoy the acquaintance of one of my assistants, a young woman, Celeste by name. By far the cleverest of all I had on my staff, she was the one to carry on the work. In order to allay any suspicion I had her detailed as a stenographer in the office of the base quartermaster—it was quite essential that she have some visible means of support while working on Jeanette.

As soon as she was installed in her new position, I sent her out hunting for rooms, with instructions to move heaven and earth, if need be, in order to secure quarters in Jeanette's home—a bold stroke will sometimes accomplish more

than all the subtlety of a Sherlock Holmes. The fact that just at this time Bordeaux was overcrowded with refugees from Paris who had come to the city to escape the attacks of the air raiders helped Celeste in the deception she employed. Before long she reported to me that she had succeeded in engaging a room in the home we desired to investigate.

During the time in which the Jeanette clue had been found and developed, we had not been idle in other quarters. The cafés and questionable resorts of the city had been kept under close surveillance, and the vigilance of the control posts had not been relaxed for a moment. I had hoped that by keeping the facts regarding Barry confined to as few as possible, so that there would be little discussion of the case, he would conclude that the first frantic efforts to capture him had through their own inertia dwindled into a mere matter of routine. If only we could cause this impression to reach him we felt sure that he would relax his cunning and, if he were outside the city, feel free enough to take a chance in slipping through our lines for a brief visit to Jeanette. On the other hand, if he were still in the

city we believed he would try to see Jeanette to make the necessary arrangements for a future meeting and then endeavour to get away into Spain, that country being his logical goal, owing to its nearness.

Therefore we tried in every conceivable way to have the impression get abroad that we had given up the chase. I even went so far as to have one of my officers casually visit the Bassens camp to talk over the case with Captain Bond. The instructions were that my officer was to admit that our department was blocked and that, in consequence, we had decided to drop the case.

Notwithstanding, the Fates appeared to be against us. If Barry had heard of our pretended relaxation, he did not attempt to take advantage of it. We were finally forced to decide that the man was far too clever to permit us to catch him in such a trap. Instead of walking into it, he was still lying low until he was sure the road to freedom was clear.

There is a risk in employing a woman in confidential work of this character. The fear that her woman's heart will secure control of her head is always staring the situation in the face.

Sooner or later, in that event, she will go to the one she is watching and tell all. Twice in my work have I had a woman undo in a brief burst of confidence the hard and tedious endeavour of weeks by telling the suspect who she was and the part she was playing.

In this case I thought for a while I was about to undergo a third similar experience. For the first two weeks that Celeste worked on it she did exceedingly well. As I sat back and read her reports of conversations with Jeanette I congratulated myself on my judgment in sending her into that house. It seemed beyond question that before long I should know the full details of Jeanette's connections with Barry.

Then, to my vexation, Celeste's reports began to take on a new and unsatisfactory tone. Where formerly they had been clear and detailed, they suddenly became rambling and vague. At once I sensed the change and called the girl in a conference. When I pressed her for a reason for the difference in the tone of her reports Celeste gave me a great shock.

"Major, I am through with this case," she announced, her eyes snapping with defiance.

"Barry is no more guilty than you are, and I know it. For once you are wrong. I don't care what you think, I'm not going to be a party to the hounding of that girl any longer. If you do not recall me, I'm going straight from here to Jeanette and confess my part and warn her to be on the watch for you." And Celeste, the one above all others whom I had trusted, flounced disdainfully out of my office before I could sufficiently recover from my amazement to answer her.

Here was a fine mess! My operative was going to the one whom most of all I wanted to keep in ignorance of my purpose. I could neither stop her nor could I fathom the reasons behind her extraordinary behaviour. I did know, however, that the case was ruined as far as Jeanette was concerned. The way Barry's hypnotic personality penetrated everywhere seemed almost uncanny.

The door opened, and Celeste burst back into my office.

"I'm sorry, Major, that I left you in such a temper," she said apologetically. "I had already told Jeanette everything before I came to

see you an hour ago. I know that to you I must seem the most despicable of creatures—a traitor —but before you condemn me I want you to come with me to Jeanette. She has just promised me to tell you the whole truth this time."

My thoughts were not pleasant ones as I silently walked along beside Celeste. She seemed aware of what was passing through my mind.

"I know just what you think of me," she began. "I realize well enough that I have committed the unpardonable sin, but the circumstances were extenuating. Moreover, before you pass judgment on me, I ask that you wait until you have heard the whole story as I have heard it. Then, if I'm in the wrong, I'll take my punishment."

"Very well, then, I'll wait," I grumbled, unconvinced.

Still the personification of gloom, I walked slowly along until we reached the house. Going up the steps, I reached for the doorbell, but Celeste, with a slight nod of her head, indicated that it was not necessary to ring. Taking out her latchkey, she opened the door.

Our method of entrance made it quite ap-

parent that others in the house were awaiting our arrival. We had just entered when a door on the opposite side of the room opened and Jeanette came in, this time accompanied by her father and mother.

The air was tense. To me it was a most dramatic moment. Here was I in the home of the girl I had been investigating, facing her. Knowing that she had heard of me from Celeste, I certainly looked for an outburst of indignation.

Shall I tell her what I suspect and defend my actions or shall I await her first move? This question was going through my mind while I bowed in acknowledgment of Celeste's introduction to Jeanette's parents. After requesting that I be seated, Jeanette, by taking the initiative in the interview, saved me from the need of deciding.

"Let me talk first, *mon père,*" she graciously entreated as her father cleared his throat. "After I have told the major my story, then you may tell yours. I do not blame you, Major," she said, turning to me, "for what you have done. You did your duty as you saw it, but—" she paused, as if carefully weighing each word lest

what she was about to say might in some way injure the man we were to discuss—"Captain Barry did not steal that money. We intended to be married this coming fall, and naturally the captain had told me all about himself. The future for both of us had been well taken care of, my father will assure you. My dot is sufficient. The captain did not need to worry about financial matters. Ever since we became engaged he has been religiously saving his money. Already he has deposits in the banks here. Not only that, but there is this also: Father had planned to turn over the active control of his business to the captain when he became my husband. Won't you believe me now when I tell you that Captain Barry had everything to lose and nothing to gain by stealing the payroll? The captain was the soul of honour, that I am sure of."

The girl's earnestness was sufficient to cause me to wonder whether perhaps, after all, the absent man had not been greatly misjudged. Her father completed the half-formed opinion in my mind by what he added when he picked up the threads of the conversation.

"Thoroughly do I concur with what my daugh-

ter has told you, *monsieur,*" said the dignified old gentleman. "We believe in the captain's absolute innocence. When he asked for my daughter's hand in marriage, I requested, as was to be expected, some definite information as to his family and prospects. The man was open and straightforward in his manner and, realizing the justice of my request, gladly supplied me with complete details. The references which he gave me I investigated through our embassy in Washington. I am proud of my name and family, *monsieur,* but I shall be glad to welcome into it as a son-in-law Captain Barry. I have recently been in correspondence with the gentleman's mother. She, too, approves of the union. I have already discussed financial affairs with him and he knows that all my wealth, in addition to what he will inherit from his own family, will give him an abundance of this world's goods. He never would have chanced ruin by stealing."

The captain assuredly had two staunch champions in the girl and her father. If what they said were true, Barry had every incentive to prove worthy. As I revolved in my mind what

I had just heard there came back to me other bits of information which I had gleaned from various sources. So far as a motive was concerned, I could clearly admit that circumstances pointed to Barry's innocence. Possibly we had been working on a false premise. Instead of trying to find Barry, the absconder, perhaps, after all, we should be bending our energies at this very minute toward finding the men who had robbed and, it might be, murdered him.

"I am now ready to agree with you that Barry is innocent," I granted, having made up my mind that, to date, our course had been wrong. "But how are we going to prove that he was the victim of robbers? It is one thing to believe a man innocent, but an entirely different one to convince the world of the fact."

For an instant or two all of us studied this new phase of the case. Then Celeste, who had been an interested listener through it all, exclaimed: "I have it! We'll all work together to help you vindicate Barry's good name. Without a doubt the men who robbed him are even now spending their ill-gotten gains in the underworld. See your friend Levy. Get him busy. It's down

there in the underworld that you'll be sure to find the clues that we want."

II

For several minutes, with Jeanette and Celeste waiting expectantly near me, I reviewed all the evidence thus far gathered. Then I turned to Celeste.

"I'll do exactly as you have suggested," I said. "I'll set Levy to work in the underworld. It's there the crooks will be spending their money—if they are still here. You two girls can help me, and together we'll see this thing through."

Celeste's judgment had always proved dependable. Some may scoff at my ready acceptance of her suggestions, yet I had learned long ago to place a great deal of dependence on a woman's intuition. Thus I agreed at once to concentrate all my efforts on rescuing Barry, hoping it would not be too late.

Determined now to make up for lost time, I arose to take my leave. But Jeanette, who had been silent while Celeste was speaking, suddenly interrupted my departure.

"Wait just a moment, Major," she pleaded.

"I've been thinking over something that Captain Barry told me a few days before he disappeared. It occurs to me that he said he had once or twice seen a man hanging around a café on the Bassens road—a fellow who looked like an American. The captain, I remembered, said he had made up his mind that the next time he saw this fellow he was going to question him."

"Did he ever mention which café it was?" I inquired eagerly.

"Not that I can recall," replied Jeanette slowly, shaking her head in disappointment.

I was thoroughly convinced by this time that we had been wrong in our analysis. I was not sorry, either, that we had to start off on a tangent. I had liked Barry and, although I had put forth every endeavour to capture him when I thought him a criminal, it would be much more agreeable for me to rescue a fellow officer, if alive, or to avenge his death, if robbers had killed him.

Promising to keep the family fully informed of the progress made, I left this home that was so loyal to Barry and returned to my office.

Here was a time for prompt action, not empty

words. At once issuing instructions for those who were working on the case with me to meet in my office in half an hour, I hurried up the stairs to give the general the latest news about Barry.

"And those are the reasons, General, why I say that we have all wronged Barry," I declared as I finished my story.

"Major, I'm very glad that you believe as you do about the boy," said the general, with much feeling. "This has been a severe blow to me, but what you tell me has taken a great load off my shoulders. I have been dreading the day when I should have to write Mrs. Barry and tell her her son was a criminal. I want you to take personal charge of the case for me. Spare neither time nor expense."

Promising to do my utmost, I returned down the stairs to meet those of my staff who had been working on the case with me. I told them of my interviews, why I had changed my opinions, and how I intended to work from then on.

"Lieutenant," I said, "take two men and interview every café owner or manager between the end of the bridge and the camp. Locate the

American Jeanette told us about and bring him to me if you find him.

"Sergeant, get in touch with Levy. Tell him I need his help. Ask him to meet me to-night at our usual rendezvous.

"Blakely, take my car and visit every control post in the city. Tell each one to be on the watch for an American deserter.

"Curlin and Rich," I continued, facing those two sergeants, "put on your 'civvies' and go into Spanish Town. Visit the cafés. See if you can pick up the trail of this American. See if any one is spending his money too freely. Bring in any such to me.

"You," I said, turning to my assistant, "have orders prepared placing this city off limits for the next forty-eight hours."

Then to the whole group:

"I shall be in my room at the Hotel Gobeneau. Report to me there as fast as you complete your assignments. We must make up for time lost. Let's go!"

The hunt was on.

The messenger I had despatched to locate Levy was the first to return.

"I had to chase him all over the city," he reported, "before I finally found him at the Hotel Bordeaux. When I had delivered your message he told me to tell you he would meet you at midnight."

Blakely reappeared next. "I have carried out your orders. The men will be extra vigilant to prevent any suspicious character from getting by their posts."

Soon all had reported except those detailed to investigate the cafés along the Bassens road. I knew that the men on this assignment had a long and tedious job.

Leaving word with the man who was on night guard at my quarters that the others were to await my return, I slipped away to keep my rendezvous with Levy. Promptly on the stroke of midnight he appeared.

"Of course I'll cover my district for you, Major," he readily promised. "Just give me a few days. I'll soon find out whether any of the men there were involved. If they were I'll get them."

Some, I suppose, will be inclined to condemn me for having any dealings whatever with a man

of Levy's type. However, he had never failed me in an emergency. In addition to his willingness to help, he had in many ways been of untold value to me in keeping me informed of what took place far below the surface in the cosmopolitan city of Bordeaux. I knew that Levy could accomplish more for me in that district in one week than my own men could in three. I used him as often as I deemed it necessary—to my mind the end justified the means.

Satisfied that if a clue were to be developed from the underworld he would secure it for me, I returned to my hotel to await the return of the last patrol. It was nearly daylight before they came in. The tale they had to tell, however, was more than sufficient to reward me for the time spent in waiting.

"We have covered every café on the Bassens road," began the lieutenant in charge of the detail, "and have interviewed every café owner with one exception, the Café Boulevard. This café has been closed ever since the day of Barry's disappearance. The place does not bear a very savoury reputation. The people next door informed us that the woman who ran it has not

been seen since Barry dropped out of sight. Neither has the American deserter who used to hang around there. I am sure we will find clues in that place."

Tired though I was, the vision of that café of the barred doors and sinister reputation effectually banished sleep from my eyes. Would we find the answer to our problem behind those dusty, time-worn shuttered windows?

All through the night I was tormented by the insistent thought that somewhere in the café we should find poor Barry's body. Then the picture of Jeanette, so staunch in her loyalty, would pass before my eyes. I planned, then, that someone other than myself would be the messenger to bear her the tidings of our discovery.

After a hasty breakfast I hurried over to French headquarters to await impatiently the arrival of my friend the French chief. I needed his help in breaking into the café, for break in I would if I could not gain an entrance otherwise. After hearing my plans he readily agreed to go along to lend the expedition the necessary authority.

"Better bring an axe," he suggested, when I told him I would supply the men.

The chief knew whereof he spoke. After our repeated knocks had failed to bring any response he gave the word to smash our way through.

Even in the bright sunlight the place looked sinister and foreboding as we attacked it. Every blow of the axe driven home by the powerful arms of Reilly found an answering knock in my heart. It seemed certain to me now that our hunt was over and that in this foul den we should find Barry's body.

As the door crashed inward Reilly stepped back to allow me to go in first. The odour that poured out forced me back for a moment. It was enough to sicken any one. But getting a good grip on myself, I finally stepped over the débris of the shattered door and, closely followed by the others, passed into the outer room of the café. The light from my electric torch played here and there while I made a hasty survey. Filth and dirt were everywhere. Half-empty glasses of soured wine, surrounded by partly eaten food, now moldy, still stood on greasy tables. The sawdust scattered on the floor had

turned green with the mold that lay on it. Dishes of rotted fruit sat on the counters. I could picture the frantic bustle as the vile crew made its getaway.

As my flash swept the corners big rats scurried into their holes. Involuntarily I shuddered to see them.

Black as night, the back room of the resort yawned at me through the open door. Again I was forced to get a grip on myself while I swung wider the door and stepped within. Here the evidence of confusion was even more pronounced.

Crumpled on the floor over in the corner lay a bundle. I picked it up and shook it out. What I held in my hand had once belonged to Barry. It was his blouse, and the left shoulder was caked with blood.

We continued our search. Into every nook and cranny of that house, from garret to cellar, my men poked—into every conceivable spot where a body might be hidden. Although we devoted hours to the search we did not come upon what we were after, or on anything that would indicate either the method of a murder or the disposal of the body.

Balked in our search here, we turned our efforts to finding the grave, concluding that Barry had been killed and the body buried. The men present were divided into squads, one to give its attention to the wine caves far down under the ground, the other to search the small garden enclosed by the high stone wall at the rear. Every bit of the ground was examined. But, as before, our results were nil. We could not find a foot of it that looked as if it had been disturbed for years.

At last we turned out footsteps back to headquarters, leaving Rich behind to close the place and board up the door we had wrecked.

The mystery was deeper than ever. But now there was no doubt in our minds that Captain Barry had met with foul play.

"I wonder if they didn't drop him into the river," volunteered the French chief.

As I went back across the bridge over the Gironde I, too, wondered.

It was Levy who came to our rescue and showed us a path out of the labyrinth. Within a few days after his promise to help me, he tele-

phoned and asked me to meet him at the rendezvous. He had a real live lead, he said.

"I've checked the gangs that hang out in my district," he informed me. "With the exception of two men, nobody is very flush just now. These two, however, seem to be spending far more money than they would ordinarily. From what I can gather they have someone in tow whom they are bleeding.

"No, they didn't commit the crime themselves. I backtracked on them to be sure. They have a perfect alibi. They can prove they were miles away from the Bassens road at the time the crime was committed. But I believe you should cover them to see whom they connect with. Find the ones who are paying them to keep their mouths shut and you'll find the ones who did for Barry, in my opinion."

That evening, in the quiet of my hotel room, our plan to ensnare the two crooks was unfolded.

"Your part, Levy," I instructed, "is by some means to induce the men to dine with you at the Chapeau Rouge Café some night this week. Try to have them there no later than seven-thirty and no earlier than seven. As you go in be sure that

you secure a table on the left-hand side facing the rear of the café."

In investigations we often employed French girls to aid us in gaining the confidence of suspects. Among the cleverest of these operatives were Marie and Clovis, two young women I knew I could trust. When Levy and I met they were on hand, ready for orders. Turning to them, I said:

"Every night for the next seven nights I want you two girls to eat your dinners at the same café. Be sure and be there early enough to order your dinner by seven o'clock sharp. Try to have it finished by seven-thirty. You must also be sure that every time you secure a table on the left side of the room but in the rear, so that when Levy and the other two come in they will not be seated behind you. This, likewise, will give you an opportunity to observe all who come in. Keep a close lookout for the others. Note where they sit and the time they come in, and so time yourselves that you will be through first. After you have paid your check, saunter past the other table where Levy and the rest are sitting.

"As the girls pass by," I went on, turning to Levy, "suddenly appear to notice them. Act surprised. Get up from the table. Go toward them to greet them. It is to be understood that they are friends you met in Nevers. Talk with them about mutual friends in that city, using names and addresses invented for the occasion and previously agreed upon. Invite the girls to join you at your table. After introducing them to the men, leave the rest to the girls."

For three nights the girls haunted that café. After dinner they remained as long as they safely could without attracting undue attention and then left, with never a sight of Levy or the two Apaches.

It was not until the fourth night that Levy and the two Frenchmen came in.

The girls, having dined, paid the check and started down between the rows of tables.

Seated in another part of the café, I watched the plot work itself out. I saw Levy catch sight of the girls and speak to them. When I left all five—the girls, Levy, and the apaches—were engaged in animated conversation over a bottle of wine.

Late that evening the two girls reported to me. "Levy carried off his part to perfection, and the two men do not suspect the plot at all. Tomorrow we take dinner with them. We can handle them."

It was all very well for Marie to assure me that she could handle these men. I was not so confident, however, of her ability to control any emergency which might arise. Levy had warned me of the dangerous character of the subjects we had under surveillance. If they learned they were dupes in the hands of my two girls, vengeance would be sure and swift. Just because Marie and Clovis had such faith in themselves was no reason why I should subject them to any greater risks than were absolutely necessary.

Unfortunately I could not take the girls into my confidence when it came to a question of their protection, for, if I did, the consciousness that, somewhere in the background, eyes were always watching their every movement might unnerve them for the task ahead. Furthermore, if anything should happen to either of them, I should never cease to regret that I had not taken the

greatest precautions to insure their safety. Inasmuch as there was the additional danger of the shadows' eventually becoming recognized if the same two were always on watch, I arranged for the protectors to work in relays.

Thus it was that from the first day on the two girls were never out from under the watchful eyes of some one of my organization. Always there were at least two of my men hovering around, ever on the alert to spring forward to their defense. Orders were issued for these men to shoot, and shoot to kill, at the first sign of treachery on the part of the two roughs from the underworld.

It was a delicate and extremely dangerous task which these girls had set out to accomplish. Their lives might be forfeit if they made the slightest mistake. They must conduct themselves in such a manner that their companions would be all the more eager for the conquest, yet, at the same time, guard against the danger of overplaying their hands and thus creating a suspicion in the minds of the others—demonstrative enough to hold the interest of the two apaches, but not enough so to cause them to drop out of

the game before we had extracted from them the information we believed they possessed.

Marie and Clovis carried out their part of the work to perfection. They trifled with the men as a cat toys with a captive mouse. It was a new experience to these men, steeped as they were in the woman-lore of the underworld. Unable to grasp the girls' intentions, they soon became bewildered. From bewilderment it was but a step, apparently, to affection. Quite before Marie realized that the situation had developed so rapidly she was much taken aback when her escort pleaded with her to marry him.

"Before I would marry any man," answered Marie, her heart a-flutter, conscious that the crucial moment for which she had been working so hard was fast approaching, "I should want to know how he planned to support me."

"Oh, I have plenty of money," boasted Victor. "I don't have to work for my living."

"No?" questioned Marie.

"No!" answered Victor.

In every man's make-up there is something which makes him want to pose as a hero in the

eyes of the woman he loves. Victor was no exception.

"I know the men who held up the American officer on the Bassens road," he boasted. "They are even now paying me to keep my mouth shut. I know how to make them pay, and pay well. The gang of five is in hiding a little way outside of Limoges right now. I am supposed to keep them posted about what goes on down here. I keep them scared, and so under my thumb. Whenever I want any money I go up and see them and tell them some wild tale about how hard I am working to keep the police off their trail, and they give me whatever I ask for. Every little while I go up and collect." Then, as if realizing that he had been talking altogether too much, he paused and looked sharply at Marie to see the effect of his words.

Marie had the feeling that her opportunity might be slipping away from her. It might take weeks before she could again induce the man to be as frank as he was at this moment—if she ever could. The situation required skillful handling.

"Won't you take me with you the next time you go to Limoges?" she begged. "You know if

we got a lot of money we could be married there as well as here."

The chance Marie took was a desperate one. If Victor were in earnest in asking her to marry him, all would be well. But if he were suspicious and just testing her out—well, that was a chance she had to take.

Victor threw his cunning to the winds and played straight into her hands. Suddenly leaning forward, he asked, "Will you go to Limoges with me to-morrow?"

The suddenness of his surrender threw Marie off her guard for a moment. Was this a trap on Victor's part to ensnare her? Had she, by her very eagerness to secure this information, overdone her part? Should she postpone the trip, pleading the necessity of replenishing her wardrobe?

"I was puzzled," she told me later. "If I made the wrong decision the result might prove fatal not only to our hopes but to me. If I asked for a delay until I could communicate with you, the man might break away from the spell which had been cast about him. I was afraid to seem too eager to go, yet if I did not seem to fall in

with his plan he might suspect that some ulterior motive had prompted the request. But everything looks all right. Clovis and I have promised to meet them at the railroad station to catch the early morning train for Limoges."

We, too, I decided, would go to Limoges—enough of us to handle any exigency that might arise. Some of our men we sent on the same train that carried the two girls and their companions. Others, including myself (for I intended to be in at the finish), were to travel overland by motor car. There was little sleep for any of us that night as we overhauled our revolvers and handcuffs.

With the headlights of our cars cutting the darkness, we roared ahead through the night, burning up the kilometers as we raced against time and the train. We must make Limoges long before the train, for we needed plenty of time to perfect our plans and look over the ground beforehand. We did not know just what conditions would confront us in that city, and time was a necessary factor not only in order to close the trap, but also to find the trap still occupied by the ones we were after.

The citizens of Limoges who stood about the station platform the next morning to await the Bordeaux express did not for a moment suspect that those with whom they were rubbing elbows were in reality Americans, and not Frenchmen as they appeared to be. Yet scattered through the crowd there listening to the incessant chatter were some of the men who had spent part of the night before driving like mad from Bordeaux.

With a shrill shriek and the grinding of brakes the Bordeaux express came to a panting stop. From one of the first-class coaches stepped Marie and Clovis, closely followed by the two men. As the crowd surged forward to board the train, the four, the men now in the lead, jostled their way through to the street.

From a position far back in the station and partly sheltered by the projecting ticket window, I watched their progress. I had to admire the coolness of the two girls. If there were a doubt in their minds about the final outcome of this adventure, they never showed it by so much as a raised eyebrow.

When they approached the curb in front of the

station, I knew that our plan was about to receive its severest test. There was only one cab at the stand, where heretofore there had always been at least four.

Would the Frenchmen notice the absence of the other three cabs and start asking questions? That thought was uppermost in my mind as I slipped out of the other end of the station and around to where I could look on. Would they suspect why they were the lucky ones to engage it, although even then others were clamoring to hire it?

There was no need to worry, however. For, to all appearances, thankful that they had been successful in commandeering the single cab, the four clambered in. With a gruff "To the Hotel Nationale" they rode away.

There is no better way to keep a suspect under surveillance than to install the detective on the box of a cab occupied by the suspect. Then, wherever the subject goes, the shadow is right there, near at hand. If it should happen, as it did here, that the cab is an open one, the cabby, by paying close attention, may be successful in snatching bits of the conversation while he drives

along. The man in the old tall hat and the rusty long coat slumped down on the box of the lone cab was none other than Rich, the dependable.

As the cab stopped at the hotel entrance, Marie's companion came forward to the driver's seat.

"We'll want you for the rest of the day," he announced. "Stay here until we have had luncheon."

When the four had finished luncheon the two Apaches, this time without the girls, came out of the hotel and stood in front long enough to signal for Rich—he had moved across the street—to pull up to the curb. Climbing in, one of them ordered him to drive them over the bridge and out along the Bordeaux road.

III

As soon as they had left Marie and Clovis at the hotel, the two Apaches began to jabber like two monkeys. It was evident that they were excited by the prospect of squeezing some more money out of the men they would presently see. As the cab in which they were seated creaked along, Rich, slouched down in the driver's seat

for all the world like a veteran cabby, tried hard not to miss a word. The gray nag between the thills of the cab was so old and decrepit that the French requisition officers in search of cavalry mounts had disdainfully passed him by. While his age counted against him as a cab horse, it was of material help to us. The slower the cab moved, the easier it was for us to keep it within sight. Besides that, slowness gave Rich an opportunity to pay closer attention to the conversation behind him. He soon learned, however, that he need pay little heed to what the pair were chatting about, for it did not touch upon the object of the trip.

When the cab turned off the bridge and headed out on the Bordeaux road, Rich, shifting himself in his seat, stole a glance backward toward the town. Then he smiled. What he saw evidently pleased him. But all to be seen were two Frenchmen on bicycles, also making the turn. The one nearer to the cab was uniformed as a *poilu* apparently home on leave, pedalling aimlessly along, to all appearances without a care in the world. Still farther back was a French postman, his little postman's tray strapped to

the handle-bars. Lazily the procession moved along in the heat of the afternoon sun, each unit in it seemingly absorbed in his own business.

"Turn off to the right at the next cross road," suddenly commanded one of the apaches.

Rich noticed that he was now headed up one of those country lanes so common in the outlying districts of France.

"Stop here," called the apache.

Rich pulled the old horse to a standstill and leisurely turned around for further orders. Even as he turned his passengers dismounted, and one of them, when he passed alongside, threw these few words over his shoulder:

"Remain here until we return. We want to take a walk," and the two swung off at a rapid pace up the lane.

As they passed around the turn and were lost to sight, the *poilu* and the postman stepped out from behind the hedge which lined the main road. Hiding their bicycles behind the hedge which had given them shelter, they took up the trail on foot behind the vanished apaches. Utilizing the friendly shelter of the trees and hedges, the shadows crept stealthily away. They

were, as the reader will have suspected, two of my men. The *poilu* was Blakely. The postman was Reilly. I couldn't have picked two better workers.

For nearly half a mile they kept up the chase. The two in front, intent on reaching the end of their journey and little suspecting that any one was following them, never cast a glance backward. At a sudden turn in the lane they stepped abruptly out into the yard of a small peasant's cottage. When they came closer to the place they stopped short in their tracks. It was plain that what they saw startled them. They probably had expected to see some signs of life, but not a living thing was in sight—the place was deserted. Their pause was only momentary, however, for, prompted by a common impulse, they both ran up to the closed front door.

As Blakely and Reilly—the *poilu* and the postman—peered out from behind their shelter, they, too, were struck by the desolate appearance of the place. The cottage, its windows shuttered and its door tightly closed, stood stark and silent in the afternoon sun.

The apaches knocked. Not a sound penetrated the closed door in answer to their summons.

Obviously uttering threats as to what would happen to those on the inside for playing such a trick upon them, once they had gained admission, the two moved back to the edge of the steps. With a short, fierce rush they threw themselves against the door. It sagged and cracked under the impact of their shoulders. They stepped back. Again their combined weight crashed against it. The old door, held only by a flimsy iron lock, swung back with a sound of splintering wood.

The intruders quickly stepped to one side of the direct line of the opening. Finally plucking up their courage, first one, then the other, stepped across the litter of the broken door into the deserted house, for deserted it was—whomever they expected to find there. Their mission was apparently in vain.

Panic-stricken by this sudden and obviously disastrous turn of affairs, they rushed blindly from room to room. In their anxiety they threw the meagre furniture about as if they expected to find those they were seeking behind some flimsy piece of it.

Meantime Blakely and Reilly had not been far behind.

"They have lost their source of easy money," whispered Blakely, for the moment forgetting that in that loss we, too, should have to share. "It looks as if the others had got tired of being bled and moved out. And judging by the amount of cussing going on they didn't leave a forwarding address."

For a few minutes longer the two concealed operatives listened to the commotion going on inside the cottage. Then Blakely turned to Reilly and whispered:

"You slip back to where Rich is waiting. Warn him that the others have skipped and tell him to watch his step when his passengers return. Tell him, also, that he will have to take them back to town alone. We'll stay behind and make a thorough search of this place."

Reilly stole away down the lane.

"I could tell by the tone of their voices," said Blakely in reporting the conversation to me, "that it was not easy for the two disappointed Frenchmen to realize the extent of the calamity which had so suddenly befallen them. It was in-

conceivable, they reasoned, that the others should treat them like this. But they finally had to admit they had been double-crossed."

With another curse at their luck, and without even going to the trouble of closing the door, the Apaches started back toward the spot where Rich and the cab were waiting for them.

"They are up to the trick of doubling back," thought Blakely.

He remained on the spot until Reilly returned with the information that he had not only delivered Blakely's message to Rich but had also come near running into the very two when he was hurrying back to the cottage.

"I just had time to throw myself flat in the grass in the field before they went by."

The operatives circled the cottage in opposite directions to make sure that the way was clear, then went inside. There was only light enough through the open door to outline dimly the objects in the room, so Blakely brought his flash into play.

"I first turned my attention to the ground floor," he told me later. "There was the usual equipment of a poor peasant's home—a table

or two, a few chairs, one cupboard which proved to be empty, and the necessary pots and pans by the fireplace. In several other rooms I found makeshift beds which looked as if they had not been slept in for some time, but nowhere a sign to tell who the former occupants were.

"In one corner I found the ladder that was used in getting to the attic. Nearing the top, I lifted the trap, and then cautiously raised my head until I could see the floor above. But that hurried glance told me my precautions were unnecessary—I had the place to myself. I climbed up for a more careful search, covering every nook and cranny of the place.

"When I was about to give up, my eye caught the momentary glimpse of a shadowy something under the eaves as my light passed over it. I focussed the beam on it and discovered it was a bundle wrapped in an old newspaper. I started to poke out my find, only to have it slip from my fingers and drop to the floor with a thud. As it landed, the frail string snapped and the contents scattered. There, among the rubbish at my feet, lay part of the uniform of an American officer—a pair of soiled breeches and a pair of

leather puttees. I did not need to see the name stamped on the inside of the puttees to tell me that I was looking at the property of Barry."

Closing the battered door as best they could, my two men, now without thought of concealment but intent only on reaching me, hurried off up the lane to recover their bicycles.

The first inkling to reach me that something was amiss came from Rich after he had left his fares at the hotel.

"There's something wrong, Major," he said. "All the way back to the city those two were cursing the others who had, they said, played a dirty trick on them by running away. They sure are mad, and what they intend doing to the others, if they catch them, is a-plenty."

We did not know the full extent of our failure, however, until Blakely and Reilly came in. A hush fell when Blakely slowly unwrapped his bundle and held up its contents.

"I'm afraid Barry's done for," he said. "In my opinion they did it either here or in Bassens and then brought the body up here for disposal. I believe if we search the grounds around the cottage we will find his grave."

"I imagine you are right," I admitted. "At any rate, we cannot afford to overlook that possibility. Take three men and to-morrow return to the cottage and give it a thorough search. The rest of us will return to Bordeaux to-night. If you find the body, telegraph me; if not, after you're sure you have done your best, return by train."

I was bitterly disappointed by the failure of our mission to Limoges. We had staked much on the trip's clearing up the mystery. I began to feel that we were doomed to failure.

When the night train for Bordeaux pulled out of Limoges it carried a number of downhearted passengers in its several compartments: the two Apaches, my two girls, and those of my men who had not stayed behind with Blakely. The rest of us climbed into motor cars.

As I sat in the swaying automobile, going over in my mind the different angles of the trip, I remembered that the most disagreeable part was still ahead. I must admit to the general that we had virtually lost hope of ever finding Barry alive.

Just as the buglers in the camps along the river

were blowing reveille we drove up in front of our headquarters. Such a tired and dirty group of Americans tumbled out of the machines that I sent them all to their quarters to take the remainder of the day off and rest. I, too, craved rest, but before I could think of leaving the office I must first tell the general all that had happened.

"It looks as if this meant the end of our hopes," owned the general, surveying the garments which I had placed before him. "I must write his mother right away."

I knew from the expression of his eyes that he found the duty confronting him an extremely sorrowful one.

"I shouldn't place his name on the casualty list just yet, General," I counselled. "It looks bad—still we have no actual proof that he is dead. Until we either find the body or capture the murderers and force a confession from them we should only cause his mother undue anguish."

"You are right," agreed the general, frankly relieved at the opportunity to defer writing. "Leave these with me," he requested, indicating the parts of the lost officer's uniform. When we

went to bed that morning not one of us could see a rift in the darkness about us, but when we gathered again in my office for our first conference after our return from Limoges, confidence radiated from everyone. Blakely, whose search for Barry's body at Limoges had proved unsuccessful, was again with us. After we had made several fruitless attempts to work out a plan, he gave us a sound lead when he suggested the following:

"What's the use of trying to decide anything until after you've heard from Marie. Let's wait until we know what happened on the trip home. Those two girls can give us more information on how the Apaches behaved after they found that the others had skipped than we can learn from any other source."

Even while I was debating about the best method to use to reach the girls, my telephone rang. Picking up the receiver, I was glad to hear Marie's voice.

"I should like to see you as soon as possible," she said.

"Fine!" I exclaimed. "I'll meet you in my hotel in twenty minutes."

"Very well. Clovis and I will be there."

Twenty minutes later, seated in the quiet of my room, I heard Marie's story of the trip to Limoges.

"On the way up," she began, "the talk centred around our approaching marriage—all the fine clothes he would buy for me after he got the money and what a glorious time we should have travelling around the country. I didn't ask for the details of how he would secure the money. Then when we reached Limoges, we insisted that we girls have a room to ourselves. I thought we might have trouble over this—but no, I really believe they intended to play fair with us, for they did not object to the arrangement.

"As soon as they had finished their luncheon, they announced that they were going to make a call on their bankers.

" 'We're going to draw a big dividend this time, and then away to Paris!' Victor said, laughing, as he and his friend walked out of the hotel.

"Upon their return I thought sure we were both going to be killed. They were very black and ugly. Where before they greeted us with

smiles and jests, they now showed their true characters, not only by their scowls but also by curses and threats. Victor raged around the room like a crazy man. His curses were terrible as he told what he would do to the men who had skipped. I finally induced him to calm down enough to talk coherently. Then we learned the cause of all their rage. You may imagine our thoughts when we realized that all our work had been to no purpose. I could have cried from the very disappointment of it. But it was no time for tears, as I soon realized when Victor proposed that we go through with our plans as far as the ceremony was concerned. For a moment I did not know what answer to give him. I must confess that it looked black to me for a few minutes. Then I saw my way out of the dilemma.

"I became indignant. I accused them of trying to double-cross us. I told them that their tale of friends with lots of money was only a lie to induce us to come to Limoges, and I insisted that we go back to Bordeaux by the next train. They both protested vigorously that my accusation was unjust. Nevertheless, I put my foot down on any proposition but an immediate return

to Bordeaux. Now that it is all over I can't help smiling at the way I bulldozed those two big cowards.

"They argued a lot, but they couldn't make me change my mind, and finally they agreed to take the next train. I didn't know your plans, so I managed to shake them at Bordeaux after I had told them to forget the marriage question until they had some money."

Marie had handled a very difficult situation with admirable courage and foresight, and I did not hesitate to tell her how pleased I was at the way she had acted.

"Keep away from those Apaches until we can reorganize our forces along some new line, and keep in touch with me on the telephone at least three times daily," I advised her as she and Clovis departed.

Back in my office I summoned Blakely, Rich, Reilly, and Green for a continuation of the conference interrupted by my interview with Marie and Clovis.

"Here's the situation as it stands this minute," I said to them. "We know Barry was held up, robbed, and—at least as far as the evidence

which we have been able to discover points—murdered in the Café Boulevard. Through the two Apaches we have learned of the hiding place of the criminals, or rather the place where they were up to a few days ago. We know also that these two Apaches were in personal contact with the criminals and have been systematically getting money from them by continued threats of exposure. What we do not know and what we must learn quickly, however, is the direction taken by the fugitives in their flight from that little cottage. The question is: How are we going to secure this information?"

"There's only one trail that we can follow," announced Reilly with an air of finality and a squaring of his broad shoulders, as if to repel the attack he felt bound to come when we heard his plan, "and that is for us to put the two Apaches to work for us."

A laugh ran around the circle. I looked for the man to fly into a rage at once, but he calmly sat back in his chair and waited.

"Go ahead, Reilly," I urged.

"We never would have learned of that peasant's cottage outside of Limoges," he went on,

"unless that pair had guided us to it, would we? Every clue of importance, with the exception of the Café Boulevard, has come to us through them. Well, then, why shouldn't we use them again to help us? You know as well as I do that those two chaps are not going to quit cold without another try for that easy money. That's our best bet. Through the girls we can use them to trail the gang.

"Here's how I should work it out: Have Marie begin making fun of the two for being such boobs as to allow the crooks to put it all over them by running away. Let her point out that if news of their failure ever got back to the underworld they would be laughed out of the city. Her ridicule will arouse their desire for revenge. Get them good and mad. Then, when Marie has them properly worked up, let her offer them her woman's wit to guide them in the search. Through Marie you can direct their hunt. Thus we shall have them working for us, although they will not know it."

Reilly's plan had in it every element of success, yet it carried an element of danger as well. I disliked subjecting the girls to further as-

sociation with the two ruffians, but I could see no other way out of it.

"I'll pass the idea along to the girls," I finally decided. "In the meantime let us not wait for the results of this plan, but go out into the city to see if we can't find a trail by ourselves. Try to learn whether any one of the various gangs has been out of the city for a long time and has only recently returned. While you are covering other parts of the city I'll go and see Levy and start him out."

I found Levy at the Café Royal. There, in a rear room, safe from prying eyes, I told him all about the fiasco of the Limoges trip and asked his assistance in checking the recent absence of any of the apaches in his district.

"I've already thought of that," he said. "Still I'm inclined to think this crime was committed by outsiders rather than by the Bordeaux Apaches, because not one in my district has recently been away from the city for any length of time, and none of them has shown up with more money than he could have picked up by some petty crime. There is one disturbing feature to me, in this case, however, and that is

the American deserter. I can't seem to get a line on who he was or even a description of him—I mean the one you told me about, the one who was hanging around the café. For once I think you'll have to look somewhere else besides in the slums of Bordeaux for your criminals."

To one less familiar with Levy than I was his advice would have smacked of a desire to shield someone by throwing us off the track. I was too sure of the man's sincerity, however, and had tried him too many times to doubt that what he told me was the truth as he saw it.

"If none of the gangs did it," I questioned, "who do you believe did it?"

"I don't know," he replied. "But if you could only locate that American deserter I believe you might be able to learn something. There is the possibility, you know, that he may have his own gang."

Each of us promised to keep the other informed as we separated.

That evening, when I explained Reilly's plan to Marie, I could not help smiling at her enthusiasm to have the two crooks working under her personal direction.

"Just a moment, young lady," I cautioned. "There's a great deal of danger for you in a plan like this, you must know. In fact, there is so much risk that I will not ask you to undertake it if you don't want to."

"Oh, I can handle them all right, never fear. After my success at Limoges I'm not afraid of them at all. When shall I start?"

"The sooner the better."

"Very well. I'll arrange for a dinner-party at the Café Bordeaux to-morrow night."

There, in the brightly lighted restaurant, she put into action the big idea which all of us hoped would bring the longed-for ending of the case. That midnight I saw her again.

"I didn't have a bit of trouble," she reported. "They are as anxious to find the gang as we are. They know that unless they can get some money they will have to go back to the slums. Having had a taste of the bright lights, they won't give up without a struggle."

For days my men, supplemented by the activities of the apaches, scoured Bordeaux for a trace of those whom we wanted, but night after night the same discouraging reports came in.

I do not know how indefinitely the chase might have been prolonged had it not been for the good work of Marie. She kept the apaches working day and night. One morning, just before I left the hotel to go to the office, she came to me with startling information.

"Victor was walking down the Rue de Gal this morning when he saw two of the gang. He is shadowing them. He sent his companion to warn me and to tell me that just as soon as he had run them to earth he would let me know. As soon as he comes in I'll try to tip you off."

The time had now come to ask the French for assistance. They were always willing enough to help us, but they were jealous of any attempt on our part to usurp their authority when dealing with their countrymen. I went over to the French chief's office, stated the facts, and asked for help. An assistant and three *gendarmes* were sent along with me.

The hours dragged as we all sat around headquarters waiting for the call from Marie. The tedious wait began to get on everyone's nerves as twelve o'clock came and went, then one, then

two, and then three—and still no call from Marie. I decided that if I did not hear from her by four o'clock, I would send out a searching party.

At three-forty-five the telephone rang.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting," Marie said, "but these stupid fools couldn't describe the place where they had followed the two they were shadowing. To make sure of the location I had Victor point it out to me. The house is out on the Paulliac road, the second building on the right after you cross the ship canal. It sits back in a field—you can't miss it. You must work fast, though, if you want to be the first ones there."

I presume our long period of waiting served to dull our usual caution, or it may have been that, in our eagerness to prevent another fizzle like the one at Limoges, someone overreached himself. Whatever it was, it came very near undoing all the work of Marie and Clovis, and it actually did cause the death of two of the men in my party. That day American blood was shed and an American life sacrificed in the hunt for the missing quartermaster.

IV

Hardly had Marie rung off before the members of my little party and our four assistants were speeding along in motor-cars toward the house on the Paulliac road. If Victor had told Marie the truth, he had trailed two of the suspects to that house, and we must get to it in a hurry.

As soon as we had crossed the canal bridge I stopped the cars and all of us got off on the side farthest from the house, using the cars as a shield while we planned our campaign for the attack on it. I knew well the type of men we were dealing with—men who would not hesitate to shoot, and shoot to kill, if they saw their way to freedom blocked.

"You, Blakely," I ordered, "take two men and work your way down this road until you have passed the house. Keep out of sight as much as possible. After you have reached the farther corner of the field, wait there until you see my signal from the rear. You, Rich, take two men and attack from this side, keeping under cover also until you have seen not only Blakely in his posi-

tion, but also until you see us come through the hedge. I will take Reilly and two of the others and, using this ravine alongside the canal as a screen, will work my way up until I can swing in behind the hedge and so to the rear of the place.

"When we are all in position we will move against the house. If they make a break for freedom, it will probably be toward the rear. As you move across the field spread out in a skirmish line and keep as close to the ground as possible. At the first sign of resistance stop and lie flat on the ground. Be careful, for this gang will shoot. If they try to break through your lines, fire on them, trying to hit them in the legs. We want them alive. But if it becomes a question of your life or theirs, see to it that you win. So long!"

Just as we climbed up the bank to circle in behind the house, I saw two forms breaking for cover in the bushes in the next field. At the same instant I heard Blakely shouting, then the crack of automatics. As we hurried on to see what the shooting was about I met Blakely and his men running toward me.

"They're wise, Major!" he yelled. "Two of them broke for cover through here! Did you see them?"

"Yes! Jump down the road beyond the house and then cut in to head them off so that they can't get into the open country!" I ordered. "Work in toward the basin, and we'll drive them into the water. While you're coming in from your end of the road we'll go in from this. Rich, circle back across the field and give the cottage a thorough search. It may be the others are still there. As soon as you are satisfied that the place is empty, join us at the basin."

I was so angry that someone's stupidity had allowed those two even to catch sight of us before we had the place surrounded that I determined I would get them if it took every man in the base. Consequently, just as soon as I had seen the other detachments start off, with the rest, I struck in on the trail of the two fugitives—I had noted the general direction they had taken.

Working our way carefully through the bushes, looking into every possible cover where the two might have taken refuge, we finally broke through into the basin section of Bordeaux.

Behind Bordeaux and connected with the River Gironde by a ship canal are a series of docks and railroad yards. Here the deep-sea freighters are brought so that they can unload directly into the cars. Four large wharves extend out into the basin and on each wharf is a honeycomb of railroad tracks. We knew that the men we were after had headed into this labyrinth.

They had forgotten one thing, however—the basin, the river, and the canal came together much like the neck of a bottle. By placing three of my men across this neck we had them penned up inside. All that was left for us to do, then, was to search every wharf and the cars standing on it.

Before attempting to do this, I thought it best to await the return of Blakely and his men. I did not know just what we should encounter and wanted all the force I could muster. As soon as Blakely arrived we started.

Reilly, with three men, was sent to act as the cork. I then divided the rest of the men into two squads, with Blakely in charge of one, while I took command of the other. We started down

the first dock. Cautiously we moved along, searching every car, every possible hiding place. But Dock No. 1 was empty. So was Dock No. 2. We turned to Dock No. 3.

My men may have grown careless from our failure to locate any one on the first two docks and, in violation of my orders, may have exposed themselves, because, as we started down the third dock, a shot rang out. I looked up just in time to see Corporal Bayless pitch forward on his face—he had been shot through the head. Before we could get back under cover a second shot followed the first—and the Frenchman with him threw up his hands and sank to the ground. When I heard the first shot, I glanced back toward the wharf in time to see a head drop down out of sight in one of the empty coal cars on the track nearest the slip.

The two crooks had taken refuge inside of an empty steel coal car and were using it as a fort to pick us off, one at a time.

It did not need my "Get out of sight!" to cause the others to hunt a place of safety—the sight of poor Bayless lying out there with the gendarme across him was sufficient for that. As soon

as I saw that everyone had secured shelter I motioned for Blakely to crawl up to where I had taken refuge behind a car.

"They're in that coal-car at the head of the string of empties," I whispered. "It's up to you and me to go in there and get them out. We can crawl across these two tracks underneath the cars and climb up on that box-car on the third track. From there we may be able to get the drop on them."

We unslung our revolvers and on our hands and knees started across the tracks.

Reilly, who had seen the two men drop and had seen our start, realized at once the hazard of our attempt. To distract the attention of the two in the car from us he opened fire on the car with his revolver. How I blessed him for his foresight as we heard the vicious spat of his bullets and knew that those inside would have to keep down or be shot!

We gained the car on the third track without our quarry's suspecting that we were so close. It was the work of a moment for us to creep up the ladder on the side of the box-car.

Lying flat on the roof, we cautiously raised our

heads and peered down at the two in their steel trench.

We may have made a slight noise, or perhaps the rising sun cast our shadows downward. At any rate, with a quick turn of their heads, both shot at us as we ducked back out of sight. There was only one way out of this impasse. The two had shot down my men, and their lives in consequence were forfeit.

"You take the one on the left," I whispered to Blakely. "I'll attend to the other."

We lifted our heads at the same instant. Two shots rang out almost simultaneously. The two murderers crumpled in the bottom of the car, all the fight knocked out of them for ever.

Our first attention, as soon as we were sure the two were dead, was given to our two men lying out there at the end of the dock. Poor Bayless had paid the price for his devotion to duty, having been instantly killed. Then gendarme, however, still breathed, although severely wounded. After giving him first aid as best we could we lifted him into one of the motor-cars and rushed him to the hospital, where he died soon after his arrival.

Our search of the dead criminals, before we turned them over to the French, was to no purpose. Neither did the search of the house by Rich throw any new light on the tragedy. We knew that we had put two of the gang out of the game, but that was all we had accomplished.

The necessity for shooting the two was unfortunate in more ways than one. We wanted, of course, to avenge the death of my two men who had been shot down from ambush, but it would have been much better if we could have captured them alive in order to question them regarding the whereabouts of the others. Their firing at us had convinced me, however, that they never would have submitted to capture, and I had not intended to lose any more men.

Leaving the two remaining gendarmes on guard, the rest of us returned to the office. Although we could account for two of the gang, we faced the fact that the remainder were as far away as ever. The only silver lining to the cloud was the conviction that, inasmuch as two were so near at hand, the others must be not far distant.

But what would the two apaches do when they

found we had reached the house ahead of them? Would they suspect that Marie had tipped us off or would they think it only a coincidence that had brought us there first? I must send the girls away directly—no chances must be taken.

"There's only one thing for you and Clovis to do," I told Marie as soon as I could reach her, "and that is to get out of town at once. Your work with the two apaches is done. Keep in the house, and to-night I'll send a car for you. Go down to Bayonne until this is over, or at least until we have had the French step in and take care of Victor and his pal. I'll let you know when to come back."

As soon as the news of the fight at the house and on the docks became known the two apaches tried to skip out of town. My friend, the French chief, picked them off the Paris-Bordeaux express and put them under lock and key until we should require them as witnesses against the rest of the gang.

The case continued to drag. In spite of our best efforts we could not unearth a scrap of evidence that was to be of any help to us. We might

never have solved the crime, in fact, had it not been for Levy.

"A stranger has shown up in my district," he informed me one night when I met him in response to his summons. "While I have no proof, I believe he is a deserter from your army. In some way he has procured a French passport and is passing himself off as a Frenchman. He sits around the Café de Verre drinking wine, but never beyond the point where he can keep control of his faculties. Nobody can win his friendship. He will not respond to any of my efforts, although I have been working on him for over a week. I even tried to have him followed, but he is on to that little game. He gives my men the slip every time. I believe you will have to take him in charge yourself, Major."

That same night, in the disguise of a French major of artillery, with a pair of coloured glasses shading my eyes, I joined Levy at the Café de Verre. For over three hours we sat in the rear of that vile dive and studied our man, first by watching him directly as opportunity offered and then, later on, by shifting our positions so that we could observe him in the many large mirrors

which lined the walls and gave the place its name.

He was not large, but it was easy to see that his tight-fitting clothes concealed an unusually powerful body. His insolence to the men about him proved that he was anything but a coward, and he was left severely alone. I sized him up as a man who would be dangerous in a fight.

Yet his every movement bespoke the hunted man. He was ever on the alert, his eyes roving around the place is if he were expecting an attack from any quarter. This alertness became all the more pronounced when a new arrival came into the café. Whenever the door opened the man would crouch down in his chair like a tiger about to spring, while his right hand would slip into the pocket of his coat. As the newcomer passed around through the crowd the man's eyes never left him until he felt sure that the innocent-looking exterior did not hide an officer of the law.

At last satisfied, he would again turn to watching the others. It was while he was thus engaged that I saw him reflected in the mirror. I got

a square look into those shifty eyes of his. One penetrating glance and I knew my man. His clothes and neat appearance told that he still had some pride, and it was easy to see that the habitués of the resort bored him—he would have none of them. Here, in the midst of many, he was lonesome. It was evident that he had come to the place not on account of the type of people he would meet but rather because he knew that here he would be safe, for the Café de Verre was off limits for all American troops.

"Here is a man," I confided to Levy, who was sitting beside me, "with every indication of the hunted crook. Afraid to frequent the better places for fear of being recognized, he has chosen this place as a safe retreat. He longs for the right kind of friends, however, and if I could only find the proper type of girl, I could not only reach that fellow, but I could also get him to talk. For all his shrewdness, he will respond to the handling of a clever girl. None of the women here could help me, because they don't interest him. This is a horrible hole, but I've got to use one of our own girls—and she'll need all her courage to work here."

"Why don't you arrest him and then try to break him?" queried my companion.

"In the first place," I answered, "we haven't a shred of evidence to connect him even remotely with any crime, much less with the Barry case. Besides, a man of his type would only laugh at me if I did try to break him. Again, we would have to catch him well off his guard. His hand is seldom far away from the pocket that contains his automatic. No, my friend, as much as I would like to lock up that chap, we must first secure enough evidence to allow us to build up a good case before we attempt to break him."

How about Celeste? The little French girl's early work on the case had already proved of great value to us. She was still making her home with Jeanette, who was patiently waiting while we fought to solve the mystery of her fiancé's disappearance. Would not she prove a valuable accomplice? The next day I called at Jeanette's home.

"What I need now," I said, "is a girl clever enough and brave enough to frequent a disreputable café every night. To all outward appearances she must become like the others. She must

play her cards so that she can become acquainted with this man and, by gaining his confidence, pull the truth from him. Celeste, are you willing to take the risk?"

"Why not allow both of us to go?" spoke up Jeanette. "Two can work on it better than one. Celeste can be disguised as a hardened frequenter of the cafés while I go along as a novice. If this man is what you think he is, he will fall for a novice quicker than for a habitué. He will never suspect me in that rôle, and——"

"But, my dear girl," I interrupted, "do you realize what a place this is? Only the worst types visit the Café de Verre. If you were ever known to have been there your reputation would be blasted for ever. No! I couldn't think of allowing you to make such a sacrifice."

"My reputation is of no more value to me than Celeste's is to her. If she can go, I can."

Celeste had had plenty of experience in my work and knew how to take care of herself. But as for Jeanette—that was another matter. Celeste broke in:

"Why don't you adopt Jeanette's plan, Major? I think it's a mighty clever one. I can protect

her, and you can also have some of your men always available. We can slip in and out again in disguise and no one will ever be the wiser."

I was convinced against my will, but the idea appealed to me. I promised the two girls that before they went to the café I would arrange for two of my men to act as their escorts until they attempted to meet the man we were after. I warned them that under no circumstances were they to enter this café without my knowledge. Last of all, I assured them that as far as their entering or leaving the place was concerned, I could arrange that without trouble through Levy. Aside from Levy, the two men who were to act as escorts, and myself not another soul was to know of the adventure.

Levy seemed glad to hear of the plan and offered to do all in his power to make the attempt a success.

"It's all arranged," I told Celeste and Jeanette after my talk with Levy. "To-morrow night we make our first visit. I will meet you with the two who are to act as your escorts."

The following night I was at the meeting-place agreed upon in company with Sergeant Bell and

Sergeant Barton. As the cathedral clock boomed out the hour of nine the girls came out of the shadows and joined our party.

I had to look a second time to be sure that Celeste's companion was in reality Jeanette. I could scarcely believe my eyes. Gone was the clear white skin—the rosy cheeks. In their place was a painted face. The long drooping eyelashes shadowing deep gray eyes were filmed over with some sort of eyebrow paste. The dark brown hair, which she always wore in a demure braid around her head, was now a riot of ringlets and curls. Her dress reached barely to her knees, while her stockings had the sheen of silk—and were quite in keeping with her part, for only the *demi-monde* wore silk stockings in France during the war.

"Before we go down to the café," I said, after complimenting Jeanette on her make-up, "I want to warn you that unless you obey my orders without question I shall remove both of you from the case. In the first place, Bell and Barton are always to act as your guards. They will call for you at your home, escort you to the café, sit at a table near by, and see that you are re-

turned safely home each night. They will protect you with their lives if necessary. Remember—under no circumstances are you ever to visit this place unless Bell and Barton are with you. Do you agree to this?"

"We do," replied both girls in the same breath.

"Very well. That's settled. As to the methods you are to employ to gain the friendship of the suspect, we shall have to postpone planning them until we see how the case develops. Mademoiselle Jeanette, allow Celeste to guide you in your part and everything will be well. That is all."

We found Levy waiting outside for us when we reached the Café de Verre. "Everything is arranged," he said. "No questions will be raised about the comings and goings of your party. Good luck to you."

With a quiet handshake and a few low-spoken words of encouragement to the two girls, I stepped aside and motioned to the four to go in. Allowing them a few minutes' leeway, I, too, pushed open the doors and walked to a table in the rear.

Jeanette and Celeste had secured a table by themselves near the centre of the room, yet on

the outer fringe of the dance-floor. The flutter aroused by their entry had hardly died away when I sauntered in. Jeanette and Celeste had been the cynosure of all eyes, not only of the men, but of the girls as well.

The man we were after sat on the opposite side of the dance-floor. From where I sat I could see that his curiosity had been aroused by the advent of the newcomers—not enough, perhaps, to make him forget his usual caution, but enough to interest him. I had purposely refrained from giving the four a description of the man; I was afraid they might try to single him out, and I wanted him to be the one to make the advances if it were possible.

During the entire evening I watched the scene before me. Never on the stage have I seen one to compare with it. Here were two girls reared in homes of refinement frequenting a notorious resort in order that the sweetheart of one could be avenged. Their acting of the parts assigned them was superb. Even when they left the place it was as if all had been worked out long in advance.

The second night was a repetition of the first.

The girls came in together, occupied the same table as on the first night, remained together, departed together. The only detail wherein the second visit differed from the first came just after the four had left the place. As they passed down the hall the suspect signalled for the manager of the café to come to his table. Although I did not hear the question or answer, I knew by the way the man pointed to the door and by the negative shake of the manager's head that we had stirred up enough interest in this cold suspect to cause him to inquire about the new visitors.

In order that he might have no suspicions, however, I had the girls remain away on the third night and again on the fourth. Possibly, too, their absence would make his curiosity all the keener when they did return. As I watched this mysterious stranger on those two nights I thought he seemed disappointed at the non-appearance of the girls—but I may have been fooling myself. Anyway, I determined to try different tactics on the fifth night. I had the two girls with their escorts separate at the doors, Jeanette and Celeste going in alone, followed shortly after by the two sergeants. The latter two, in-

stead of sitting at the same table with the girls, took a different one—thus it would appear that there had been a quarrel between the girls and their escorts.

The quick eyes of the suspect did not lose a bit of this. The four were under close scrutiny for over half an hour. The man seemed to be puzzled. Were the sharp jaws of a trap concealed in any of the moves? Finally, satisfied that everything was all right, he coolly arose and walked across the dance-floor.

Was he going out? Had he seen the trap?

No. With a bow he moved out a chair at the table where the girls were sitting and without so much as asking permission, sat down at the side of Jeanette.

It had worked.

I met the girls as they were on their way home.

"That man who came over to your table and sat down is the one we are after," I informed them. "What did he have to say to you?"

"He asked me if I were not a stranger to café life," replied Jeanette, "and I told him yes. We chatted on at random for a while, and then he

asked us to dine with him to-morrow. We said that we would."

"That's splendid progress," I replied. "To-morrow night I will change your escorts so that he won't be suspicious. Don't play him too fast. Keep him in suspense. The longer you play him the harder he will fall when the time comes."

V

For almost a week the plot developed. At first, Jeanette seemed in a submissive frame of mind toward our quarry, then she would retreat as if in fear. It was all working out so nearly according to my ideas that I determined to keep the two girls away from the café for a few nights a second time.

"You are not to go back again this week," I told them on Thursday night. "Let him miss you for a few days—perhaps your absence will help break down his caution."

Saturday was such a hard day for me that I had gone to my hotel early. It seemed as if my head had hardly touched the pillow, however, when I was awakened by a pounding on my door.

"Major, wake up, wake up! It is I—Celeste!"

Hastily I wrapped a blanket about me and

threw open the door. Celeste and the night orderly were standing in the hall.

"Dress yourself and come downstairs!" Celeste ordered. "Jeanette is at the Café de Verre! She has secured a confession! Our man engineered the whole crime! Hurry! I have a cab waiting!" And she was gone before I could ask a single question.

"Hurry to the Casino!" I instructed the orderly. "Tell Major Sherborne to bring ten men and come to the Café de Verre at once—tell him to be sure they are well armed!"

"Jeanette chafed at what she thought was an unnecessary delay," began Celeste as we started off in the cab. "So to-night, in spite of all that I could say, she was bound to visit the café. She seemed to think that she had the man on the verge of a confession and that any delay might be fatal. Naturally I went along with her. We saw the suspect when we entered the place, and as soon as he saw us he came up to us. You know that the café has several small private dining rooms which open off the main corridor. Well, he was insistent that we go into one of them. Right away he started in making love to Jeanette.

She was carrying her part along so well that I could see that if they were left alone she would win that confession. So I whispered to her that I was going outside, but that I would be within hearing distance if she wished me.

"Once out of the room, I went to hunt for the manager. I told him who we were and that I wanted him to be on hand in case Jeanette needed help. Then he and I sat down near the door and waited.

"In about half an hour Jeanette came out to me and said that she had won the confession and said that I must hurry and find you. I demurred at first, but she was so insistent that I finally decided to do as she requested. After warning the manager again I left to come to your hotel. That's as much as I know about it."

How I cursed my folly for ever having permitted those two girls to take part in such a dangerous enterprise! The cab seemed to move at a snail's pace while I pictured Jeanette alone in such a dive and at the mercy of an unprincipled scoundrel. So intense did my feelings become that I discovered myself excitedly urging the driver to make faster time, although his poor

scrawny beast was doing its utmost. It seemed hours, instead, before we finally reached the Café de Verre.

"You slip in first," I whispered to Celeste. "See if you can find the manager and have him meet me in one of the other private rooms. Tell him to let me in without being seen if he can."

Allowing Celeste time to make the arrangements, I stepped within. The manager was beckoning to me from the door of a private room.

"Has anything happened to the girl?" I asked.

"She's all right so far," was his calm reply.

"Can we get her out of that room for a few moments?"

"I can tell you how to work it," broke in Celeste. "Let me knock on her door and ask her to step outside for a moment. She can tell him that I am leaving and would like to speak with her. Then, when she is outside, you," turning to the manager, "can go in and keep him quiet until the major can make his plans. You can slip out again when Jeanette returns."

Jeanette, her face flushed from the excitement of the moment, soon came into the room where I

was concealed. She hastily described the situation in the other room.

"He has told me everything," she whispered. "He swears that he will never be taken alive, and I believe it, too. He has been telling me all about himself while we were sitting on the sofa. He has his automatic on a small stand near his right hand, and every time the door opens he sits there with that terrible gun in his hand ready to shoot, his eyes fastened on the entrance. Long before you can cross the room he will have killed you. Oh, how can we capture him?" And the girl, who but a moment before had shown self-control, now seemed on the point of breaking down.

I made a quick mental picture of the room—the sofa there on the far side and the table in the centre. The girl was right. I knew it would be nothing less than suicide for any one to attempt to reach him alone. Then I saw our only chance, a desperate one.

"Listen closely, Jeanette," I emphasized. "Can you return to the room, leaving the door slightly ajar so that I can see through the crack at the back? Then can you make yourself appear to

surrender to him? Can you sit upon his lap for three seconds and, twining your arms around his neck, pin his right arm to the sofa with your weight? If you can do this, in those three seconds I can cross the floor and reach him before he can prevent it, and we can get him. It's a desperate chance for both of us, but if we are to capture him at all, it's our only way."

"Yes, Major, I can, and I will," she assured me.

With a grim smile Jeanette left me, and as I quietly followed her out into the hall I had a feeling that she would not fail me. From behind the door which, as I had asked her, she had left slightly ajar, I watched her walk across the floor to the sofa, slide down into the lap of the criminal, and slowly twine her arms around his neck. Then, as if in a complete surrender, she slipped over on to his right arm and lifted up her lips for the first kiss.

I had seen enough. With a bang that aroused the whole place I slammed back the door. Just as the culprit struck Jeanette full in the face and threw her to the floor in one last frenzied attempt to reach his gun, my automatic banged down squarely on his head.

Without a sound he slid slowly off the sofa and lay in a crumpled heap beside the unconscious girl. I knew that my blow would only stun him, and so before he could recover, I rolled him over on his face and snapped the handcuffs around his wrists.

Celeste, who had been watching from the hall, came running in to kneel beside the unconscious form of Jeanette. Tenderly we picked her up and laid her on the sofa, and forced a few drops of wine through her tightly clenched teeth. As the wine warmed her blood the brave girl slowly opened her eyes and, recognizing us, did her best to force a smile upon her bruised and swollen face. After a time she had revived sufficiently to stand the journey home. In the same cab which such a short time before had brought me to the Café de Verre I sent the two girls away.

We could now turn our attention to the prisoner on the floor. Even as the manager and I looked he opened his eyes and glared up at us, all the while cursing himself for having allowed a girl to dupe him. By the time we heard Major Sherborne's voice outside demanding admittance the prisoner was as well as ever, with the

possible exception of a headache and a bad bruise where my revolver had come in contact with his skull.

Briefly I outlined the night's adventures to the major, cautioned him to be doubly careful that our manacled prisoner did not escape, and as the military police marched him off toward the Casino, I left for my hotel.

The trip to the Café de Verre had been a hectic one for me, but it had been successful, and I could not find it in my heart to censure the girls for their deliberate violation of my orders. Thanks to Jeanette, we now had one of the criminals, while she, at the same time, had his confession as well. I knew that as soon as I heard her story I could build up a strong case against the man. Unquestionably he would be hard to break, but I hoped that by handling him in the right way we could finally force him to tell us all the facts connected with the Barry case. When I went to bed I promised myself that before twenty-four hours had elapsed I would have the answer to the crime or know the reason why.

Early next morning I presented myself at Jeanette's house. Celeste met me at the door to

dash my hopes to the ground by politely but firmly refusing to allow me to enter, saying that Jeanette was completely unstrung by her previous night's experience and that her doctor had absolutely forbidden any one to see her.

When Celeste noted the look of dismay that spread over my face at the news which she had just given me she volunteered the following: "This much of Jeanette's adventure I have been able to pick out from her ravings: Your prisoner was the brains of the plot—was the one who planned it and carried it out. He saw the captain going over to the bank alone and noticed that the customary pay-guard was not accompanying him. Before Captain Barry returned the plans had been made. Assisted by the four others, who used the Café Boulevard as a hangout, he waylaid the captain. One of the four met Barry in the road and informed him that Jamison (the name the criminal had given Jeanette) was dying in the café and wanted to see an American officer, since he had a confession which he desired to make. Captain Barry, not suspecting a trap, stepped inside, only to be struck down by an iron

bar in the hands of the man he supposed he was to interview.

"What happened after the blow was struck I am unable to say, for at that point in the recital poor Jeanette became hysterical again and now moans and sobs for her captain," ended Celeste, promising that she would call me the minute it was possible for me to see Jeanette.

I had to be content with this. But the more I thought about the story I had just heard, the more I became convinced that it was not wise to wait longer. Delay might mean the escape of the other men we were after. I believed that I knew enough to try and get a confession from Jamison. Anyway, I was convinced that it was worth the effort, and so I went to the Casino.

There for two hours I battled with the prisoner in an endeavour to break down his resistance. Using the few slender threads of evidence which Celeste had been able to pick up from the disjointed ravings of Jeanette and calling upon my imagination for those which were lacking, I built up a story of the crime.

For a long time the man was obdurate, but he finally broke under the continued questioning

and admitted his part in the crime, acknowledging that he had planned and engineered the whole thing.

"That's good as far as it goes," I broke in, determined not to give him time to reconsider, now that I had him started, "but what became of Captain Barry? Where's the money? And where's the rest of the gang?"

The prisoner answered my last question first. "Two of them you've already killed. Down at old Fort Médoc you'll find the others. You'll learn the answer to your other questions if you capture them"—and I thought that I saw the suspicion of a smile flit over the sullen face in front of me. Not another word could I get out of him.

At this time Fort Médoc had not come into the fame it was later to enjoy as a camp for our German prisoners. Three miles down the Gironde, it stood desolate and abandoned. Originally it had been one of the inner defenses of the old city of Bordeaux, but with the advent of modern artillery it had outlived its usefulness and been given up as a fort. It was situated on a small island jutting out into the river, here

bridged across by the French with an old draw the chains of which had long since rusted apart. Its granite walls, fully fifteen feet high, had withstood the ravages of time, while the few buildings still standing inside were inhabited by spiders and large wharf rats. Altogether it made an ideal hiding place for fugitive criminals, especially because there was a belief that river pirates still used it as a rendezvous.

I could not throw off the thought of the cynical smile I saw cross the criminal's face when he told me to go to Fort Médoc—it savoured too much of a death trap. Our experiences with this gang had taught us to be on our guard at all times; we had not forgotten the fate of Corporal Bayless and the French gendarme. Before we attempted an attack on the fort we had better make a thorough investigation. Remembering our failure at the house on the Paulliac road, where we had been discovered before we could get the place surrounded, I thought it a good idea to make a survey of the fort from a distance.

Accordingly, with our field glasses Major Sherborne and I went down to look it over. This time we were careful to leave our motor-car far

enough up the road to prevent the possibility of any one seeing us. Although there was a well defined path leading from the road we were on to the entrance of the fort, we did not dare to use it. Instead, we forced our way through the tangle of grass and weeds in the field. Plunging directly out across the waste, we wallowed on until we finally reached our objective, a small knoll about halfway between the main road and the fort. Its covering of dense vines and bushes made it an ideal screen.

With our glasses focussed on it, we carefully looked over the fort for signs of recent occupancy. Our range of vision inside the fort itself was limited to the angle of the entrance. As our eyes became accustomed to the deeper shadows of the place, Major Sherborne spotted a solitary man on guard. He was sitting close against the right-hand wall. From his position in the shadow he could see any one coming along the path, although he himself could not be seen until the draw was reached, while the rifle resting across his knees spoke volumes regarding the kind of reception we might expect if we attempted to force a passage across the bridge.

Moreover, a cool determined man in that position armed with a high-powered rifle and with plenty of ammunition available could exact a terrible toll even before a company of soldiers could capture the place.

"What do you think of the situation?" asked Sherborne.

"There's only one thing to do," I said. "We must make our attack under cover of darkness from the front, or river, side. If we can reach that small strip of land between the fort and the river we can scale the walls and get in behind them. That point over there," I continued, indicating a small spit of land near the island, "will be a good place for us to make the attempt. We can swim to the fort easily from there, and by landing at the foot of the wall we can come upon them before they realize that we are anywhere near. They will never expect us from the river."

At ten o'clock that same night a motor-car with its headlights dimmed, containing Major Sherborne, Lieutenant Blakely, Lieutenant Greene, Sergeant Rich, Sergeant Reilly, and myself, with the driver stole quietly out of town and

down toward old Fort Médoc. Just before we reached the path leading across the fields to the fort we alighted. There was no need for words —the part each was to play had been carefully rehearsed in my office earlier in the evening. Blakely, with Greene, Rich, and Reilly trailing along behind, struck off down the path toward the fort, there to establish an ambush for the criminals if they attempted to flee in that direction.

With the others started on their way, the major and I for the second time that day plunged off into the tangle of grass and weeds. If we had found our progress difficult by daylight, we found it doubly so in the darkness as we struggled along trying to reach the point from which we were to make our swim. Slipping and dropping into unnoticeable holes we forged ahead, to arrive at the place half an hour behind our designated time.

Before we left the motor-car we had taken off all our surplus clothing. All we had to do was to kick off our shoes. Our flannel shirts, breeches, and woollen socks would answer for our protection even though they would make our move-

ments more difficult once they became water-soaked.

We could not have chosen a more favourable night for the venture. Clear and warm it was, with the moon not due to rise for several hours. The water, however, fooled us, for it seemed icy cold as we waded into it. A few steps, then the plunge, and we were embarked on our hazardous undertaking. The swim seemed endless, and I was beginning to think that we had lost our way and were headed out across the river when my feet touched bottom. As I scrambled up the bank to the foot of the fort I promised myself that come what might I, for one, would return over the drawbridge.

We squeezed the water out of our garments as well as we could and dried our automatics. Then we sat down to recover our breath. When we were rested, we stood up and, using our hands to guide us, felt along the wall for some projection that we could use to aid us in climbing up. Our fingers finally found what we sought. When we reached the upper edge of the wall we slowly pulled ourselves over it, keeping as close to the top as possible. This was the most dan-

gerous part of our attempt, since then, if ever, those inside could see us while we were silhouetted against the skyline. Lying flat on our stomachs, we waited in suspense for the shot which was bound to come in case we had been observed. But not a sound came from the black pit encompassed by those vine-clad walls.

Thus far we were safe.

Well satisfied that we were still undiscovered, we wriggled across the wall to the inner edge preparatory to dropping down into the courtyard, and by grasping the outer edge we eased ourselves over. For a moment we hung suspended. Then we let go and dropped, trusting to luck that we should land safely. With a soft thud our stockinged feet met the cobble-stones of the yard.

We were inside the fort.

Crouching low against the wall we had just conquered we again paused for some indication that would tell us whether the occupants had heard us.

Still not a sound.

We had made our entry without discovery. But there was yet the last and by far the most

dangerous part of the work ahead of us—that of locating desperate criminals in the dark interior before they could see us.

Down upon our hands and knees we started on our crawl toward the drawbridge, where we were morally certain at least one of the gang would be found. Moving along, guided more or less by instinct, stopping every few feet to listen for some sound that would tell us the position of those we were after, we crept across the courtyard. It was slow work, and it was some minutes before we were able to distinguish the entrance. At last we singled it out, and again we dropped down even lower than when we were crossing the yard. Our only hope of finding that sentinel was either by hearing him move or else in getting him between us and skyline. Scarcely daring to breathe, we lay there on the cold stones, straining our eyes as we tried to separate the figure from the surrounding gloom.

Suddenly Sherborne grasped my arm. "There he is at the right of the entrance, leaning against the corner of the wall!"

Once indicated, he loomed up like the giant that we were to learn he was.

Again resorting to whispers I suggested to the major that we creep up behind the wall and step around it quickly to get him. "But don't shoot unless he hears us," I admonished. "Stand by to protect me if he attacks while I am trying to reach him with the butt of my gun."

A second time we went forward. If we had moved carefully before, we were doubly cautious now, for the sentinel was himself more than a match for either of us, even if he did not have that deadly rifle—with the rifle he was indeed a formidable antagonist. Closer and closer we moved toward him still unsuspecting and still gazing intently out into the field—it was barely possible that he might have heard my other men out there as they moved into their positions. At any rate, he neither saw nor heard us as we crept upon him.

Before he had a chance to realize that there was any danger from within the fort I was upon him. A sudden blow from my automatic and his game was over. The rifle in his hands fell with a clatter. We also dropped while we waited to see if the disturbance had aroused the others about the place.

But all was silent.

Again the Fates were with us. Before the fallen man had a chance to realize that we had him we rolled him over on his back and, utilizing our belts for rope, trussed him securely, using his own scarf as a gag.

Now that we had the sentry disposed of, we started on a tour of inspection of the buildings. As we turned off on our right to make a circle I noticed a tiny beam of light coming out through a knothole in one of the shutters of a small building on the opposite side from the way we had passed when going from the wall to the gate—that is why we had not seen it before. Creeping up to the shutter, I peeked through the knothole. By the dim light of a candle flickering on a table I saw a lone man asleep on a cot. Across from him was an open doorway through which could be seen the foot of another cot which presumably belonged to the guard whom we had just tied up. Allowing my companion to examine the place so that there would be no slip when we forced our way inside, we drew back for a whispered conference.

"We'll slip around to the door," I said, "and

before he gets the sleep out of his eyes we'll have him cornered."

Slowly and with infinite care we edged around the building, going entirely by the sense of touch. When about halfway around my fingers came in contact with the door. With the utmost care I lifted the latch and gently tried it.

The door opened under my touch. The way was clear.

"Ready," I quietly whispered. With a spring I was inside. A quick rush to the cot and the sleeper was covered.

"One move and you're gone," I whispered, as he blinked up at me in the dim light.

While I was bending over him searching for weapons, I was startled by a cry from Sherborne.

"Look out!"

I ducked just in time to escape a blow from a heavy club which was descending toward my head. Then I wheeled around and was about to pull the trigger of my automatic to shoot at this assailant who, awakened by the noise of our entrance, had rushed out from the inner room, when I recognized in the contorted face of the

one fronting me the features of the long-lost Captain Barry. It was unquestionably Barry, but it was Barry strangely altered. In a flash I guessed what was wrong—Barry had completely lost his mind.

Sherborne's cry of warning had been instantly followed by his body's catapulting through the air to land squarely on the shoulders of the crazed man, who was knocked off his balance. The two crashed to the floor in a snarling, fighting heap. I had hoped that the fall would stun Barry, so that Sherborne could bind him to prevent his doing any more damage. Unfortunately, however, the fall only seemed to increase his fury. With a savage growl of rage he twisted from underneath the major and turned upon him. It seemed ages that I stood there watching the two struggling for mastery—Sherborne fighting to protect himself and subdue the maniac without injuring him, if possible; Barry, on the other hand, with all the cunning and viciousness of the insane, fighting for a death-grip on his fellow officer's throat.

Over and over they rolled, first one and then the other for a moment gaining the advantage,

only to lose it the next instant. All during the fight I had to stand back, impotent to help, knowing that if I relaxed my vigilance for so much as an instant my prisoner would either join in the fight or else, in the resultant confusion, escape.

At last, worn down by the maniacal strength of Barry, Sherborne came to a realization that the tide of battle had turned against him. Under those circumstances there was only one move for the major to make.

He made it. His fist suddenly shot out, catching Barry square on the chin. The struggle was over.

Then, wiping the perspiration from his face, Sherborne got up from the floor and came over to me. I handed him my automatic with a nod in the direction of our prisoner, and went over to the spot where Barry lay on the floor. It was the work of a second to pull off his shirt and of another to tear it into strips. With the strips as bonds, I tied his hands behind his back and his feet together.

Leaving Sherborne on guard, I hastened to the entrance and called in my other men, who

all this time had been hiding out there in front of the drawbridge. Relieving Sherborne, and placing Rich and Reilly on guard over our two captives, with the remainder of the party I took up the search of the place. Tucked away under the bed in a far corner in the inner room we found a cheap suitcase. Opening it, our eyes were gladdened by the sight of pile upon pile of French banknotes. Our find proved to be a little more than half of the stolen money.

At last, reaching the conclusion that the old fort held no more secrets, we started back with our captives across the dark fields to where our car stood waiting for us.

Our first thought after our arrival there at the Casino was for Captain Barry. A telephone call to the Beau Desert Hospital and an explanation of the condition of the captain brought a medical officer with detail.

From Jamison and the two Frenchmen we had captured at the old fort I was able to secure the missing links.

"We never intended to hurt the captain," Jamison began, his former stubbornness gone in the face of our recent success. "We wanted to

knock him out until we could grab the money and make our get-away. We got excited and hit him too hard. He was hurt and hurt bad. Jean —one of the men you shot at the basin—knew a doctor who could keep his mouth shut, so he went out and brought him to the Café Boulevard. He told us a piece of Barry's skull was pushed against his brain. We tried to get him to operate, but he wouldn't do it. We knew that if Barry died it would be the guillotine for us. So, while you were looking for Barry, we had him in the café nursing him. We knew you'd search the café sooner or later, so we decided to clear out. We went to that house outside of Limoges. It belonged to Jean. When we got a chance we moved Barry to the cottage. When he got well we found he was crazy.

"The two apaches," continued Jamison, "came into the case when we went to Limoges. Victor supplied us with the motor-car that belonged to his employer. From then on both of them bled us. Then we got tired of being worked and made plans to return to Bordeaux so that we could watch for a chance to escape on some foreign-

bound vessel. While waiting for a chance to make our get-away we decided to separate. Jean and his friend went to the Paulliac house. The rest of us went to the old fort. You know the rest."

Jamison was correct. We did know the rest, and without undue delay we sent the trio to jail. We found, when the evidence developed, that Jamison had never really been a member of the army. He was what was sometimes referred to as a militarized civilian, and he worked for a time for an American contracting firm. He went overseas for just one purpose—to get free transportation to France. At the first opportunity he broke away and began looking for chances to prey on the army. He got twenty-five years, and he is still at Leavenworth.

The other two were turned over to the French and they finally went to the African penal colony for life.

The rest is soon told. Barry is still alive. But he is not the Barry of old. Gray and aged long before his time, he lies in an army hospital in the United States fighting hard, with the aid of the surgeons, to regain his reason. And Jeanette?

Jeanette has never forgotten. Nor will she ever. She is still true to her American captain, and in Bordeaux she is patiently waiting for the day when once more the man she loves will come back into her life.

## THE GLOVED HAND

A BELIEF in fatalism was one of the early psychological phenomena discovered among our men in France. Of those who had gone unscathed through battle, few there were who could not tell of queer pranks played by Fate. There was the case of Sergeant Hollis. Who could deny that Fate cast the die which drew him from the shelter of his tent on that wild night of August, or that the howling gale and driving rain through which he plunged were not grim settings prepared by Destiny for the enactment of tragedy?

On such a night "Pop" Hollis naturally would have been inclined to hug his quarters closely. Fate, however, willed otherwise. It led him out into the storm and to the tent of his crony, Corporal White of Squad A. Even then all might have gone well had not Fate again taken a hand, this time inducing Hollis to join the poker game

in progress there, and, in so doing, sit with his broad back toward the flap of Squad A's tent.

Of the men in that poker game, Corporal White apparently was the only one who observed and remembered the quickly moving scene that followed.

"We had just raised the limit, and interest in the game was intense," White recalled later. "The only sounds were the muttered curses as someone lost, the demand for cards, and the rain's tattoo on the roof.

"Suddenly and silently the tent flap parted. A single shot—a crash—a scream of agony from Hollis as he collapsed and slid from his chair—a sound as if someone had slipped in the mud outside—then silence and the beating of the rain on the tent roof. In that intense flashing moment, as I looked at the opened tent flap, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a gloved hand hastily withdrawn!" He paused, as if re-living that terrible moment, then went on quickly:

"For an instant we were dazed. It all seemed impossible, preposterous—as if the night itself had lifted an unseen hand to strike a deadly blow.

Then, gradually it dawned upon us that 'Pop' had cashed in his last chip, and that we had allowed an assassin to escape. There was a mad rush for the door. Soon the tent was filled with our officers and men. Major Carney at once assumed control."

So ended Corporal White's own story of the tragedy; and so began our search to find the secret of the gloved mystery.

Major Carney's first move was to order his officers to inspect every revolver in the camp. The only gun he found that showed any evidence of having been discharged was that of Private Moore, one of the night guard. The major, not satisfied with Moore's explanation of the condition of his revolver, placed him in the guardhouse.

A few days later the investigation of the shooting was held in the office of the Commanding General of Base Section No. 2, at Bordeaux. After the testimony had been completed, the general suggested that Major Carney turn over to me, as provost marshal, all the information in the case, as well as the prisoner.

Later in the day, when Carney entered my

office with a soldier in handcuffs, guarded by two other soldiers, I was surprised to observe that the prisoner possessed none of the earmarks of a desperate criminal. He was a young man about twenty-three years old—a clean-looking chap, not one to be singled out as the perpetrator of such a dastardly crime.

"Well, Moore," I demanded, "what have you to say for youself? Better tell us the truth, so we can judge what's best to be done."

There was no hangdog expression about Moore. His frank gray eyes looked directly into mine as he answered:

"Major, I'm *not* guilty of this charge! I did *not* shoot Sergeant Hollis! It's true that my revolver had been discharged that night. I was on guard at the corral and I fired at a dog that was sneaking around because I was afraid he would stampede the horses."

"Did any one hear this man's shot?" I asked, turning to Major Carney.

"No," answered Carney. "All of the men on guard denied having heard a shot. We were examining the revolvers when Moore sprung that tale on us."

"All right, Moore, go ahead with your story," I ordered.

"There's no more story to tell, Major. I didn't do it, and I don't know who did," he insisted, with quiet dignity.

If this man had killed Hollis he was the coolest proposition I had ever encountered, I thought. Self-possessed even in the face of the terrible charge hanging over him, he showed none of the nervousness of a guilty conscience—no shifting of the eyes, no twitching of the hands nor shuffling of the feet. Either his nerves were under remarkable control or he was innocent.

"There must be some motive behind this murder," I pondered. "Only a crazy man would shoot down a man in cold blood without some reason for it, either real or fancied.

"Was there any bad blood between these two men?" I asked Major Carney.

"Yes," he replied, "or so it seems to me. I have learned that this man and the man he is accused of killing were rivals for the hand of the same girl. A few nights before Hollis was killed, he met Moore and the girl out walking. When Moore returned to the camp that night Hollis

met him at the entrance and told him that if he caught him bothering the girl again, he would thrash him."

Jealousy, then, might be the motive. Yet as I watched Moore, calm even when the major mentioned his girl, I couldn't bring myself to believe that he was guilty.

"All right, Major," I said finally, anxious to be rid of him so that I might talk with Moore alone. "I'll send you several of my men in a day or so, to help you collect the necessary evidence."

When he had departed I turned to the accused soldier.

"Moore, I'm sorry for you if you did this, for it means hanging."

"Hang me, if you want to!" he cried. "But before God I'm not guilty! It's true that Hollis did drive me away from my girl, but I knew that he would soon tire of her, for she was a good girl and not his kind. Hollis was a handsome devil, Major. He was one of those tall lithe men, with snappy black eyes—eyes that seemed to hypnotize a woman; and many a victim had fallen before them, if you can believe all he

said. He prided himself upon his ability to fascinate women—you know the kind. But I knew I could trust my girl and could afford to wait. See this!" He handed me a note. "She says there for me not to take any chances of getting hurt fighting with that man—for me not to doubt her, that everything will come out all right!"

The more I studied Moore, the more firmly I became convinced that he was the victim of circumstantial evidence and was innocent.

"Well, Moore," I finally told him, "I shall do my best to free you if you are innocent, and to hang you if the evidence points to you as the guilty man. I am going to send you to the guardhouse and there you must remain, while I try to unscramble this mess."

When the sergeant of the guard had taken him away, I carefully analyzed the evidence in the case. On the face of it, jealousy was the motive. The recently discharged revolver—no one except Moore to vouch for the fact that it was a dog that he had shot at—everything pointed toward Moore as the guilty man. Yet I could not make the evidence coincide with the apparent sincerity and frankness of the accused man.

Finally I decided upon a plan of action, summoned three of my operatives, and outlined it to them.

"Rich and Kirkland are to work in the open," I instructed, "while O'Malley is to work under cover. You two"—I designated Rich and Kirkland—"will proceed to Toulouse, where you will report to the commanding officer. Make it plain to everyone you meet that you are from the Intelligence Department working on the murder. Just one precaution: Major Carney seems convinced that Moore is guilty and may unconsciously influence you to his way of thinking. Check up every lead that he gives you, but keep the result to yourselves. Work out in the open so that your activities will protect O'Malley, who is to work secretly.

"You, O'Malley," I continued, "will be regularly transferred to Company A. You are to pass yourself off as a recruit just in from the States. Work cautiously; listen to all the gossip of the men, but do not follow up any leads or clues you may dig up until I give you the word. Our man Berman will be our point of contact; report to him as frequently as possible."

O'Malley was the first man on the ground. He had been supplied with orders that definitely assigned him to Company A, as a replacement for Hollis. He experienced no difficulty in carrying out his part of the plan, for no one suspected who he was. By the time he was a full-fledged member of Company A, the other men had arrived at Toulouse. Presenting their orders at battalion headquarters, Rich and Kirkland boldly announced themselves to the orderly.

"Tell the major that we have been sent down by the provost marshal to investigate the murder of Sergeant Hollis," they said.

Before mess that night every man in the camp knew that the two men from my department were in town.

"You two men follow my instructions," suggested Major Carney, "and we'll soon clear up this investigation. Every atom of evidence points to Moore as the one who fired the fatal shot. Here is a list of men who have a knowledge of the circumstances. If you need help, let me know."

"If it pleases the major," began Rich, "we

would request that the soldiers whose names are on this list be summoned here for questioning."

"Right," agreed Carney. "I'll have them here at four o'clock to-day."

Four o'clock found Rich and Kirkland seated at a desk in the anteroom of Major Carney's office; while the hallway was filled with soldiers waiting to give evidence.

"Yes, I was present when Hollis accused Moore of trying to steal his girl," testified one of the soldiers. "Hollis told Moore that he would give him an everlasting beating if he bothered the girl again. I also heard Moore tell Hollis he would get him if he had to wait a thousand years."

"Moore told me that he would kill Hollis if Hollis harmed a hair of the girl's head," reported another. "Moore seemed afraid that Hollis would injure the girl."

And so it went. Not one of the soldiers had a friendly word for Moore.

The girl who apparently was the cause of the tragedy was the next person to be interviewed. She would give us a new angle, we were confident.

"Yes, I knew both Sergeant Hollis and Private Moore," she replied to a question from Rich. "Mr. Moore has been my friend ever since he came to town. I never did like Sergeant Hollis; he was insulting. Before the murder I told Mr. Moore about something Hollis had said to me, and I found it difficult to restrain him from starting to the camp to have it out with the fellow then and there. You see, Mr. Moore and myself had planned to be married as soon as the war was over, and because of our secret understanding, he felt he had the right to protect me from the sergeant's insults."

We had hoped that this girl would give us a real clue to follow—one that might lead us to someone else, instead of to Moore. Instead, while she was doing her best to help him, she was actually pulling the cord tighter and tighter around the neck of her lover.

My only hope now rested with O'Malley. If he should fail me, the only course left for me would be to go through with the prosecution, on the assumption that I had been fooled by Moore. O'Malley found it unexpectedly difficult to dig out leads from members of his company. All

military organizations are more or less bound by cliques, and Company A was no exception. O'Malley was to all appearances a raw recruit—why should they take him into their confidence? Before he could be admitted to full comradeship, he must pass muster as a "regular fellow." It required time for O'Malley to win his spurs with his buddies, but at last he did it.

"Wanter go out on a little party to-night, O'Malley?" asked Corporal White, one evening, as the two were returning from the mess tent. "I've got a date with a couple of dandy girls who are real sports. Come along, if you want a good time."

"Do I want to go along?" questioned O'Malley. "Well, you can tell the world I do!"

"At last I'm elected," he chuckled to himself, as he went to his tent to dress.

"The woman I'm going to introduce you to," observed White, as the two were walking along the road toward the town, "is an old sweetheart of poor Pop Hollis."

"She must miss him, then," commented O'Malley, trying for a lead. "I suppose she was the only one he had?"

"Oh, no! Sarge was what you'd call a lady-killer. He was worse than any sailor—Pop had sixteen girls in every port. But let me give you a word of advice. If you take a fancy to this girl and she reciprocates, just watch your step; she's got the devil of a temper and a jealous streak in her. I saw her one night after she had a glimpse of Pop with another woman. She was raving mad with jealousy. You know, on the quiet, I think Pop was afraid to come out in the open and tell her he was tired of her and was going to leave her."

"Well, she won't get me if I can help it," reflected O'Malley drily.

"Here we are," White finally announced when, arrived in town, they halted at the door of a typical French café. "Here's hoping you make a hit with the jane." He opened the café door and led the way to a table for four.

"Where are Tinta and Marie?" he questioned the waitress who brought the wine. "Tell 'em I'm here with a friend I want 'em to meet."

The news that White was in the café brought the two girls from a back room. Tinta, the former sweetheart of Sergeant Hollis, sat down be-

side O'Malley, while Marie devoted her attention to White.

And the game was on.

Tinta, a dark-haired beauty with snapping black eyes shielded by long black lashes, plainly was of Spanish ancestry. Not all of the fiery loveliness had been burned out in the consuming life she had followed; yet in her features appeared traces of hardening lines which no amount of paint and powder could efface.

"O'Malley has been sent here to replace Hollis," White confided to her. "Better treat him right, for he has lots of money and is a darn good fellow."

O'Malley, observing the changing expression of Tinta's face during this introduction, saw her flinch ever so little as Hollis's name was mentioned; then her eyes glittered ominously.

"For all the world like a rattler's just before he strikes," was the way O'Malley described that look of hers the following day when he met Berman—the operative through whom he was to make his reports to me. "Tell the major," he instructed Berman, "that at last I have struck a real live lead. Have him hold up the trial of

Moore until we can sift this. I may need help on it very soon."

Our search for the slayer of Hollis now reduced itself to a battle of wits between O'Malley, with his Irish shrewdness, on one side, and the girl, with her Spanish cruelty and cunning, on the other. O'Malley met her as often as possible. For a long time she seemed indifferent to his blandishments, although she was more than willing to share his wines and accept his gifts. Yet O'Malley persisted; for by now we were convinced that locked up behind that flashing pair of eyes was the solution of the mystery. The problem was how to force her confidence.

O'Malley's love-making finally won him the place in the girl's heart that formerly had been occupied by Sergeant Hollis. He became her accepted lover—a position that allowed him a certain latitude which he was not slow to grasp.

"Say," he begged one night as they sat over their wine glasses, "am I the first and only man you ever really loved? Tell me the truth, Tinta," he added after a pause.

Tinta looked him straight in the eye. She seemed to be weighing her answer carefully.

"No, my dear," she said at length. "One other man occupied the place in my life that you do, and—that—man—is—dead!" The words came haltingly. "I'm not one to be played with, then discarded for the next pretty face," she went on quickly. "Remember that, my dear, if you ever feel like flirting with any one else!" Again O'Malley saw the flash of venom in her eyes. He was no coward, yet cold chills ran along his spine.

Later, the memory of that meeting haunted him, and he decided that if he were to carry out his plan of action successfully it would be necessary to have assistance. He watched his chance, and when some of his buddies came into Bordeaux on leave, he joined them.

"You see, it's like this—she's no ordinary woman," he explained, when I teased him for running away from a woman. "A devil dressed up in woman's clothes—that's what she is. I'll admit I'm up against it in handling her and I need your advice. I can't induce her to tell me a bit more than she already has. But you can bet that she knows far more than she will tell. She knows who killed Hollis."

"Here's how we shall have to handle it, then,"

I decided. "We'll take a leaf from Tinta's own book and see if we can't beat her at her own game. I'll transfer Berman to Company A. Then, after he is settled in his new assignment, I'll send Celeste down. You keep on with Tinta, but be on the watch and see that she doesn't shoot you in the back. After Berman and Celeste arrive, keep it a party of four: you and Tinta; Berman and Celeste. Stay together; don't let the party break up if you can help it. Help Celeste win the friendship of this woman. Eventually, one of you will get at the bottom of the mystery."

After some discussion I managed to get the commanding general's approval of the transfer of Berman to Company A. And, with the order for Berman's transfer in my hand, I hurried over to the hotel, where Berman and Celeste were to meet me.

"Berman, you are to be transferred at once to Company A, at Toulouse," I told him. "You must be ready to leave this afternoon. Celeste will follow you there as soon as you are ready to start your work.

"Celeste," I continued, turning to her, "when

you reach Toulouse your work will be to become acquainted with a frequenter of the Café Nationale—Tinta is her name. O'Malley will arrange for the introduction. You are to try to win her friendship. Make her your companion; confide in her. Berman will pose as your sweetheart and you two will join O'Malley and this girl. Arrange it so there will be only the four of you. Just as soon as you have won the girl's confidence, Celeste, see if you can persuade her either to live with you in an apartment or to invite you to live at her home. When you and Berman have carried out these instructions let me know, and I will arrange for the next move. We must work fast, for the general is anxious to clear up the case."

And so Berman, dressed in the uniform of a private and with the rest of his equipment stowed away in his barrack bag—for all the world like a raw recruit just in from the States—arrived at Toulouse.

"Here's another recruit for your company," grumbled Major Carney to the captain of Company A. "It's a wonder they wouldn't send us a real soldier for a change."

During the first few days at camp, Berman was a busy man. They gave him no time for relaxation with their "rookie" drills, kitchen police, and guard duty. But as soon as the work eased up, he obtained a pass to visit the town with O'Malley.

"Tinta, I want you to meet a pal of mine," said O'Malley, after the two men had entered the café. "We both played together as kids, and joined the army at the same time. I left him at Bordeaux when I was sent here, but we eventually fixed it up so we could be together again. Don't you know of some nice girl we can get for him? If we can find one, the four of us can have a good time by ourselves."

"You needn't bother," laughed Berman. "I've got as nice a girl as I want, right now. The only unfortunate thing is that she's in Bordeaux while I'm here."

"Why not have her come down here?" suggested Tinta. "I'll look after her."

"That's mighty good of you," Berman told her. "If you will take her under your protection, I'll do it."

I knew that my plans were progressing well

when I opened Berman's letter next day and read his message: "Send Celeste along."

"It's time to go, Celeste," I told her. "Good-bye and good luck!"

Celeste was quick to take advantage of the other woman's offer of protection. Within a few days she was overjoyed to hear Tinta say: I'll tell you what let's do! Let's cut out this café life. You come to live with me at my home. The two boys can come there, and we four can have some jolly times together."

"Fine! I'll gladly do it," responded Celeste. "I'll move to-day, so we can surprise the boys."

"I've got her where I want her," was the laconic message I received from Celeste. "We are ready for the next move."

That message was a life-saver for me. I had been dreading the daily conferences upstairs with the general. I was afraid he would force my hand. Now I could tell him I was going out of town on a case. I intended to take good care, too, that he didn't see me again until I had this mystery solved.

Late that night, a motor-car quietly slipped out of the city. Marguerite, one of the most

fascinating and brilliant of my operatives, was curled up on the rear seat.

Before morning Marguerite and I were safely hidden away in a small inn on the outskirts of Toulouse.

When I sauntered into town that morning, I was dressed in civilian clothes. My only disguise consisted of a pair of coloured glasses and a cap pulled well down over my face.

Finally I found my way to the camp of the Americans. There, seated on a bank, I waited for O'Malley or Berman to come along. O'Malley came first. As he passed me I whispered the name of the inn where I was staying and told him to meet me there with Berman early that evening.

When they arrived I rehearsed with them the parts they were to play in the final scenes. Celeste was to receive her instructions from Berman, as opportunity offered. The two men returned to the town to set the stage for what we hoped would be the last move in the baffling case.

When night came, O'Malley and Berman escorted the girls to the Café Nationale. A short

time after they had entered, Marguerite and I followed. We seated ourselves at a rear table, in such a position that Marguerite would be facing Berman.

"Say! O'Malley, that's some peach that just came in with that man!" whispered Berman, loud enough for both of the girls to overhear.

For the rest of the evening Marguerite and Berman carried on a persistent flirtation. It was cleverly done; sufficiently noticeable to attract the attention of the two girls, yet not bold enough to cause a disturbance.

The next night O'Malley called at Tinta's house alone. He told Celeste that Berman had said that he was not going out.

"Guess he wasn't feeling very well," volunteered O'Malley. "Anyway, let's go over to the café for a drink and a little music."

When the trio entered the café they saw Berman seated at a table deeply engrossed in conversation with Marguerite.

Pretending that she did not see them, Celeste left it for Tinta to mention Berman's evident dereliction.

"There's your sweetheart over there, with that

doll face," said Tinta, as soon as they were seated, pointing to a table across the room. "He didn't stay at camp, after all. When he said he was sick, it was only an excuse for coming here with that girl. Let's go over and tell him what we think of him!"

"No! No!" wailed Celeste. Then, turning to O'Malley, she begged, "Please take me back to the house. I can't bear to stay here another minute!"

O'Malley was only too willing to take them back home. He knew that the time was ripe for Celeste to carry out her part of the plan—to play upon Tinta's sympathy in such a way that, forgetting her own danger in the sorrow of her friend, the girl would tell us just what we wanted to know.

"Oh, what shall I do?" sobbed Celeste, as soon as the two girls were alone. She threw herself upon the couch in a simulated paroxysm of grief. "Berman has left me! I cannot go back to my own home now, and I don't want to live without him!"

"I know just how you feel, my dear," consoled Tinta. "Maybe, though, it's someone he knew.

Wait a couple of nights, and then if he doesn't return to you—— Well, just wait and see!"

For two nights the girls, accompanied by O'Malley, haunted the café. Berman openly flouted Celeste, all the while persistently making love to the new girl.

"It's no use, dear!" cried Celeste, when the two returned home after the second night. "I can't stand it to see another girl with him in my place." In apparent desperation, she started for the door. That movement broke down Tinta's reserve. Quickly she seized Celeste and forced her back to the couch.

"Don't be foolish!' she expostulated. "I know just how you are suffering, for I once went through just such an experience. But I didn't kill myself—not I!

"Once I had a sweetheart," she went on. "His name was Sergeant Hollis. Often we talked of being married as soon as the war was over. He seemed a nice fellow, and in him I saw my one chance of escaping from the life I was living. Then, one night, he left me—for another woman. The next time I saw him I accused him of not caring for me any more, and he laughed in my

face. I asked him about his promise to marry me, and the brute told me he never had intended to marry me at all. No man could ever treat me that way and get away with it—never!"

"Wh-what d-did y-you do?" stammered Celeste.

"I waited and watched until I was sure. Then I decided that if I couldn't have him, no other woman should. The night I determined to punish him, I slipped out in a driving storm. In the darkness I found my way to his camp, and shot him down!"

"Weren't you afraid of being found out?" asked Celeste.

"No. I had seen to that. I had dressed in old clothes, with a waterproof over my shoulders. Hollis had left a pair of his riding gloves here one day and he had given me his army revolver. I put on the gloves, so that no one could see that a woman's hand held the revolver.

"I stood outside the tent where he was and thrust my gloved hand through the flap. Then I shot. I ran back here and hid the gloves and my water-soaked garments under the eaves, where they are now. I'll hunt up that revolver

and to-morrow night we'll put on the old clothes and walk out toward the camp. When Berman passes on his way to meet that other woman, we'll shoot him," she added coolly.

Celeste had solved our problem now. But she faced a new problem that we had not foreseen. She must get the information to me before Tinta could carry out her threat to kill Berman.

Therefore, watching her chance, she slipped out while Tinta was asleep and hurried to the camp. When O'Malley heard her story he immediately warned Berman, for he realized that Berman must be told even before he came to me. Berman it was who must get under cover and remain there until I had an opportunity to arrest Tinta.

And then, after warning Berman, and cautioning Celeste to keep out of the house, O'Malley hastened to me with the good news.

Breathlessly, he poured forth the story that he had had from Celeste.

"You protect Celeste," I warned, "while I go to the French and have them make the arrest at once."

Without delay, therefore, I hurried over to the nearest French police station. There I made myself known to the authorities, told them as briefly as I could all the facts of the case, and urged them to make the arrest as quickly as possible in order to prevent Tinta's escape, in case she should have been warned of our plans.

Just as the police crashed down the door that Tinta had refused to open for them, she sent into her own heart the bullet intended for Berman.

Upon the table lay the clothes she had worn the night of the murder and the gloves that had concealed her identity. And lying beside her was the revolver which, only a short time before, she had turned upon her faithless lover.

Dying, she unwittingly saved Private Moore from the gallows.

## CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

IT WAS an early June morning in Bordeaux, and the Rue d'Intendance was all but deserted as the jeweller Bouchard unlocked the door of his prosperous-looking shop and jauntily stepped inside.

A moment later the same Bouchard, hair dishevelled and hands gesticulating hysterically, rushed through the open door into the street.

"Ruined! I'm ruined!" His shrill, falsetto shrieks echoed down the deserted thoroughfare. As if in answer shutters opened, and there quickly appeared from nowhere a motley crowd of sleepy but wide-eyed neighbours.

Bouchard stood before his shop wringing his hands, and wailing, "I've been robbed—ruined! Call the gendarmes! The gendarmes!"

An urchin darted from the crowd and sped along the Rue d'Intendance to the nearest police station. There, between gasps, he told the story of Bouchard, the jeweller. Then through the

swelling crowd about the door of the jewellery shop the local police chief with his men pushed their way.

Within they found chaos and destruction. In one corner of the shop stood an old-fashioned battered safe, its creaky door gaping wide, its contents scattered in confusion about the floor. Show cases, cupboards, and drawers, were torn open.

Still gesticulating wildly, Bouchard followed on the heels of the gendarmes. He ran to the looted safe, and for the second time that morning thrust his hand deep into a secret compartment where his most precious diamonds had been stored. It was empty.

Ignoring the jeweller's wailings, the chief stepped quickly across the room to an open shattered window that gave mute testimony of the manner in which the intruders had made their entrance and escape. He looked out, searching the shadowed alley below; and there, huddled in a recess between two walls, he saw the silent form of a gendarme, bound and gagged.

And so began a thrilling hunt for glittering diamonds and desperate men that led first

through the underworld of Bordeaux, then to a woman's apartment, and finally to a deadly gun battle for the possession of a deserted shack on the side of a hill.

My first information of the Bouchard robbery came over the telephone from my friend, the Chief of the French Secret Service.

"Major, it looks to me like a professional job," he said, after he had related the circumstances briefly.

And when I visited the scene in answer to his summons, I agreed with him. There was not a trace of a clue—only twisted window bars, shattered glass, a piece of joist leaning against the wall of the alley. And our efforts to obtain information from Bouchard were unavailing. He could think only of his lost diamonds.

Next we turned our attention to the unfortunate gendarme who by this time had been released from his bonds and had returned to the police station.

"It happened while I was patroling my beat last night," he told us. "Just as I arrived at the entrance to the alley that runs behind Bouchard's

store I was startled by the sound of breaking glass. As I looked down the alley I saw two dark forms drop down from the window and disappear into the darkness. Drawing my revolver, I started after them. I supposed they would run. Instead, they must have crawled forward to meet me, for as I passed an angle in the wall one of them felled me with a blow on the head. When I came to, I was alone and securely bound. For hours I tried to free myself, but they had done their work too well. That's all I know."

"Were they wearing uniforms?" I inquired.

"No, they wore civilian clothes—that much I did see," he replied.

This answer told me that the robbers must have been Frenchmen, not American soldiers; therefore, I was relieved of the responsibility of hunting them. I returned to my office.

But my detachment from the affair was destined to be short-lived. A few days later, when the Bouchard robbery had passed from my mind, the French chief appeared at my office with the jeweller in tow.

"Major, it looks as if it's your case, after all," said the chief. "Bouchard has been thinking it

over. He recalls now that a few days before the robbery two Americans dressed in civilian clothes entered his store. One asked to see a platinum wrist watch and some diamonds. Bouchard opened the safe to show them. While he was thus engaged the second man roamed about the store, finally halting near the open safe. He stood there studying it for a few moments. After much haggling, the men refused to buy and left the store in an angry mood, vowing vengeance for what they termed an attempt to exploit them because they were Americans. I believe these two are the men we are looking for."

"What did they look like?" I asked Bouchard. "Would you recognize them if you should see them again?"

"One was rather tall and well built, while the other was somewhat shorter and thin," mumbled the jeweller. "No, I don't think I would know them if I saw them again."

Not much of a description to follow in running down two criminals! I despaired of gaining any information of value from Bouchard, and immediately cast about for some definite clue

to work on. First, I called upon the French chief to place a watch on the pawnshops; then on my old ally, Levy, "the king of the underworld," to learn, if possible, whether any women of the demi-monde had appeared recently wearing new jewellery.

Their search was without results. It was apparent that the crooks were too clever to dispose of their loot through the pawnshops, while Levy confided that not a piece of stolen jewellery had shown up in his district. A check at American training camps near by revealed that of the five men who were reported absent from their quarters on the night of the robbery, each had an iron-clad alibi.

As a last resort, I turned to "Spanish Town," the least reputable of the two divisions of the Bordeaux underworld. Spanish Town—separated from Levy's district by the business section of the city—was closely guarded by military police to prevent any Americans from entering. Although it was difficult to see how any of our men could possibly enter in uniform, I detailed a secret service man, Sergeant Baxter, to cover the section.

Dressed as a rough sailor, he visited the few cafés that were allowed to remain open.

"There is one woman in the district,—a frequenter of the Café Royale, who appears to have several new pieces of jewellery," he reported. "Her name is Josephine. Another woman has told me that she was proudly sporting a new platinum watch and a diamond ring."

"Can you get Josephine to talk?" I asked, eagerly.

"I'll try," Baxter promised.

Night after night he haunted the café, and finally succeeded in striking up an acquaintance with Josephine, but he was unable to discover even where she lived. She was willing enough to meet him in the café, but beyond its doors she remained a mystery.

After one disappointing attempt to follow her home from the café, Sergeant Baxter called on me for aid. "She knows me and is wise to me when I start to shadow her," he said.

I determined to go to the café myself and attempt to shadow the woman, and that night I set out on my quest, dressed in an old suit of clothes and a worn-out cap. My hands were

stained and grimy from immersion in oil drawn from the crank case of my motor-car. Lieutenant Murphy, our doctor, had skilfully painted a black eye on my face.

Entering the café in the role of a sailor just off a ship, I sat down at a table opposite Baxter, and waited. Josephine arrived at last. For hours, it seemed to me, she and Baxter sat there drinking abominable wine which I, too, was compelled to drink to keep from being thrown out of the place. And when, finally, she made a movement to go, Baxter diverted her attention, while I slipped out of the door ahead of her. In a shadowy doorway on the deserted street I waited until she started on her homeward journey.

Then I followed her, sometimes slinking into doorways or corners when she turned around, sometimes flattening myself against the walls of friendly houses. Once, after she had turned a corner, she suddenly wheeled about and retraced her steps. I had barely time enough to throw myself into a gutter before she was looking back along the way she had come. But my efforts were rewarded at last when I saw her

enter her home, letting herself in with a latch-key.

Having located the woman, the next move was to find out who her callers were. In this the Chief of the French Secret Service aided me by placing in the house one of his woman operatives named Clovis.

It was not long before Clovis reported to me that an American—not a soldier—was visiting Josephine three nights a week. This American was soon identified by Baxter as a civilian working for contractors on the Bassens dock extension. His name was Robert Anderson. Although the friendly relations between this man and the Spanish Town woman who had just come into the possession of new jewellery strengthened our belief that we had located at least one of the criminals, we did not attempt to arrest him at once, for we were anxious to locate his confederate, and also to recover the missing diamonds. Evidently the gems had been carefully hidden.

Our first endeavour was to make sure that the jewellery worn by Josephine was part of the loot from Bouchard's store. Bouchard himself was so

certain that he would recognize his property, if given the opportunity, that I arranged to have him visit the café with me, risking the chance that Josephine might know who he was, although such a recognition would mean an exposure of our plans.

Painstakingly, I instructed the excitable jeweller as to how he should act.

"We shall secure a table where you will be able to observe the woman and the jewellery," I told him. "When you are sure of your identification, let me know. We shall leave quietly before she becomes suspicious. But be very careful of your actions, for the woman will be sure to warn others if her suspicions are aroused."

Soon after Bouchard and I had seated ourselves at a table near the door of the café, Baxter sauntered in and chose a table near ours. He was opening his first bottle of wine when Josephine arrived. She stood in the doorway leisurely surveying the crowd, in search of a familiar face. Then, spying Baxter, she slipped into a chair at his table. Thus far our plans had progressed favourably.

Hardly had the woman finished greeting Baxter when Bouchard suddenly jumped up from his chair, after one look at her wrist.

"Where are you going?" I asked, puzzled by his sudden move.

"That woman has my platinum watch!" he hissed. "I want it!"

"Sit down, you fool, and keep quiet! Do you want to spoil it all?" I demanded, seizing his arm.

"I want my property!" he insisted, fighting to free himself.

I glanced quickly at Josephine. It seemed to me as if she must have heard, yet it was apparent that she was paying little or no attention to us.

So far, then, we were safe. But there was no telling how far my excited Frenchman might go. I must act quickly. Already others in the café had heard the quarrel and were craning their necks to see what the scuffle was about. This was no time for argument—there was only one way to settle it.

My fist shot out and struck Bouchard squarely on the point of the chin. He dropped forward

on the table. The blow resulted as I had hoped. The waiters, accustomed to such scenes, quickly surrounded us and hustled us out into the street.

Still dazed from my blow, Bouchard, of course, was frantic with anger when he realized who had struck him. He turned to reënter the café for the avowed purpose of tearing his watch from the woman's wrist.

I strode after him to intercept him. His attitude called for threats of still more vigorous action before I could induce him to accompany me to the French headquarters. His identification of the wrist watch had been dramatic enough to convince the most skeptical that we were on the right track.

With the watch identified, our next move was to find out whether Anderson had purchased it—as he was sure to maintain if we arrested him—or whether he was guilty of the robbery. That could be determined only by placing a close shadow on him. Baxter was assigned to this task. I arranged with the superintendent to put him to work as Anderson's assistant. Since Anderson was a structural iron-worker, this meant his working on the skeleton of a new warehouse,

climbing up and down ladders after tools, or swinging aloft on steel girders.

For a time there were no new developments. But at last Baxter learned that Anderson had a pal by the name of Fleming. On the nights that Anderson did not go to the city, the two were always together. But whenever Anderson visited Josephine, Fleming, instead of joining his mates in the usual camp activities, occupied his time by taking long walks. Following him on these jaunts, Baxter was surprised to discover that he invariably visited an old tumble-down house on a hill back of the camp. Fleming would disappear inside the shack for a few moments; then, reappearing, he would return directly to the camp.

What was the reason for these mysterious nocturnal visits? We determined to see for ourselves what within those dingy walls was of such interest to Fleming. Our search met with failure. While we could detect Fleming's footprints inside, the place apparently was empty.

Not long afterward it became evident to us that Anderson was growing suspicious of Baxter's rôle. On one occasion he sent Baxter down

to the ground to bring up a bar. Just as Baxter stooped to pick it up, a wrench that Anderson was using whizzed by Baxter's head and buried itself in the ground!

"I'm sorry, old man!" apologized Anderson, though his look belied his words. "The thing slipped from my hand."

Baxter was uncertain whether the dropping of the wrench was an accident, as Anderson asserted, or a deliberate attempt on his life. At any rate, he determined to keep a close watch for a similar occurrence. For days he watched, all the while feeling that Anderson's eyes followed his every move.

The second attempt was made one day when the two men were on the roof fitting a girder in place. Baxter was at one end, Anderson at the other. Baxter glanced up in time to see Anderson deliberately push his end out with his foot. That one glance saved his life. As the heavy girder slid forward to knock Baxter from the beam on which he was standing, he met the oncoming menace by throwing himself toward it and grabbing it with both arms, and so rode to safety. If he had missed, he would have plunged

downward to sure death, forty-five feet below. There was no doubt of Anderson's malice now.

As he lay in his bunk the next night, Baxter saw Anderson motion to Fleming to meet him outside. When they had disappeared, the sergeant quietly walked out of the door to shadow the pair. The two men sauntered aimlessly along and finally climbed a hill back of the camp. Baxter followed. Choosing a spot where they could observe any one who might approach along the path, they seated themselves upon a rock. Baxter dodged into a vineyard bordering the path and wormed his way around until he was directly behind them. Then he dropped down upon his stomach and stealthily crawled through the grass until he was within hearing distance. It was a dangerous move. Baxter knew that discovery might mean instant death; yet he knew, too, that here was the opportunity he had been awaiting.

"I tell you, Jim," Baxter overheard Anderson growl, "that man's a 'dick,' and he's wise to us. Twice I've tried to bump him off, but both times he's had the devil's own luck and escaped. I wish I had him here right now!" Just then

the cold shivers played up and down Baxter's spine. "He's getting on my nerves, that's all! We're suspected and we want to make our getaway before they nab us. Day after to-morrow's pay day. As soon as we get our money we'll beat it to the old house, dig up the swag, and then jump over into Spain. The sparklers are worth thousands of dollars. We can live like two kings there. No one can touch us."

"You're right, Bob," agreed Fleming. "We'll get away the same night we get our pay."

They sat there on the rock, building air castles, planning the life they would lead, once they were safe across the border, until heavy drops of rain interrupted their dreams of gold. Unaware of the net that was drawing closer about them, the two arose, stumbled down the path in the gathering storm and hurried into the camp.

But not so Baxter. Drenched from the shower, but jubilant because at last he had conclusive proof of the guilt of the pair, he hurried to my room.

"We can get them sure, Major," he cried.

"Of course we can," I answered. "Somewhere in that deserted house these two have hidden the

loot. You return to the camp, Baxter. When you see them start off after receiving their pay, telephone me. I'll have the motor-car with plenty of military police in it, ready and waiting here at my office. Just as soon as I hear from you we'll start for the house. We can catch them red-handed with the loot on them. In the meantime, take good care of yourself. Don't let them get you in a pocket."

At last the night for action came. My motor-car was waiting outside my office. Seated in it were three of my best men—all scrappers. Four of us were sufficient to handle the two crooks, I was sure, since we expected to have the element of surprise on our side.

"They have just left," was the laconic message that Baxter flashed over the telephone from the camp.

Strapping on my automatic, I jumped into the car.

"Let's go!" I ordered. And off we started.

We planned to leave the car some little distance from the shack—the noise of the exhaust might give warning before we arrived. Turning into a side road, the car halted. The four of

us got out, looked to our revolvers, and started across the field to stalk our quarry.

We hoped to catch the two robbers digging up the treasure. Crouching low in skirmish formation, we were slowly closing in on the house when one of them, stepping to the door, saw us.

A flash, a report, a bullet whining by our heads told us that, instead of surprising them, they had the "drop" on us.

We fell on our faces while we waited for their next move. We didn't have to wait long. Another flash, and the dirt was kicked up about ten feet in front of my face. Well, two could play at that game! My automatic cracked and a forty-five bullet sang its way through the open door and flattened itself against the opposite wall. We had them cornered, but the problem was to get them out without any of my men being killed or even wounded.

Slowly I rolled along the ground, hugging it as close as I could until I reached the man nearest to me.

"Crawl back to the car," I whispered. "Then drive to the cavalry camp at Bassens. Tell the captain what we are up against. Have him rush

ten men armed with rifles and plenty of ammunition."

Quietly the man rolled away in the darkness, while I prepared to place the house under siege.

"You, Bill," I whispered again, "move over until you can cover the rear of the house. If you see them trying to escape, shoot, but aim high; we don't want to kill them except as a last resort. The lieutenant and I will watch the front and the other side."

And the siege was on.

Every little while a revolver would bark, and a shadow in the house would disappear. Then when all seemed quiet, a shot from within would warn us that we were dealing with desperate men. It seemed ages to us before the noise of a motor-car was heard and the captain of the cavalry came crawling up to the line.

"Where are they?" he whispered.

"In that old shack," I whispered back. "We must wait until morning; then if they don't surrender, we'll blow up the whole place. Have your men surround the house."

The hours of darkness dragged on, punctured now and then by shots from the besiegers and the

besieged. But with the first break of dawn the desperadoes, looking from their fortress, realized that they could not hope to drive off the small army surrounding them.

A white handkerchief waved aloft on a stick was their token of surrender.

"Come out with your hands up," I ordered, "or we fire!"

Out they marched, hands stretched high.

"Where's the stuff you stole?" I demanded, after we had searched them.

"Back there on the floor," said Fleming.

We trooped in. The two thieves had been dividing the loot when they saw us coming. Not satisfied from what Bouchard had told me that it was all there, I ordered the robbers searched again. Around Anderson's waist we found a money belt. Inside of it were the missing diamonds.

"So you were holding out on me, were you?" Fleming demanded angrily. "You couldn't play fair even with your pal, could you? You damn crook!"

Fleming confessed. Our evidence was complete. Josephine, although she denied all knowl-

edge of the robbery, was willing to surrender the jewellery Anderson had given her.

At the court-martial both men pleaded guilty and were sent to Fort Leavenworth for ten years.

Recently, in a Cleveland newspaper, I read that Anderson had been arrested in Boston, Massachusetts, charged with having escaped from the military prison at Fort Leavenworth. A slippery chap was Anderson!

## THE COUNTERFEITERS

CAMP GENDICOURT, perched high upon the plateau overlooking the Gironde River Valley, was dozing in the peaceful laziness of a midsummer Sunday afternoon. Work of every description, except that necessary to the life of a training camp in war times, had been dispensed with on this day. It was the last Sunday for many a weary week that the majority of these men who had been in training would have the opportunity to rest and attend church. The chaplain of the ammunition train had determined that on this day he would make his final and, if possible, his strongest appeal to the boys.

"Boys, this war is a mighty serious proposition. I want to urge you all to put yourself right with man and God before it is too late," he entreated. "We shall soon be at the front now, and in the thick of it. Don't go into battle

until you have made your peace with your Creator. If you want help, come to me at any time at my quarters."

When the chaplain finished, his hearers separated into small groups; some in a spirit of bravado laughing at the words of the chaplain; others, with tears in their eyes, went back to camp to write home the long-neglected letter.

Among the men who made up the train was a poor white boy, gathered in by the draft from some mountain home in Tennessee. Months of hard training had done much for him in making him physically fit, but all the training in the world could never change that tall, ungainly figure into a trench fighter. And so John had been assigned to the ammunition train.

Bringing up the ammunition to our combat units at the front was a man-sized job. Working nearly all of the time in Stygian darkness, on a wagon loaded with high explosives, jouncing and bumping around on shell-torn roads near the front, in constant danger of a quick flight heavenward, either from his own load, or from a shell lobbed over by the Boche, or even from

a bomb descending from an enemy airplane, the men in our ammunition trains must of necessity have nerves of steel.

The real dangers of ammunition running, exaggerated as they were by the wild tales of his bunkies, while not in the least affecting the courage of this boy from the mountains of Tennessee did, nevertheless, make him believe that his chance of ever again seeing his beloved mountains was very remote. For a day or two after the talk by the chaplain, John wandered around as if in a daze. Finally, one evening he presented himself at the chaplain's quarters and asked for an interview.

I had hardly finished with my mail the next morning before the chaplain was at my office.

"Major," said the chaplain, seating himself in response to my invitation, "I have in my care a young fellow from Tennessee. He has lived quite a wild life, I reckon, but that is past and done with now. He has just told me a most remarkable story, which I believe you should hear. I have explained to him that duty demands that he repeat it to you. He is outside now, but before I bring him in I would request that, if possible,

his name never be mentioned in connection with the story."

A provost marshal in war time is confronted with many strange situations, and here, indeed, was another novel one—a chaplain asking a man to repeat what had been told in the sacredness of the confessional.

"I am willing to give you my word, Chaplain, that the confidence will be kept, providing your soldier has not himself committed some act that makes him liable to punishment," I promised, wondering what all the mystery was.

"You need have no fears about that, Major," reassured the chaplain, "I'll vouch for him." Then he went to the door and called the soldier. "John," commenced the chaplain, "this is the provost marshal. You may freely tell him all that you have told me."

I motioned for John to be seated.

Then in a slow Southern drawl and in his mountain dialect John told me his story.

"Yer see I live up in the Tennessee mountains with my clan," he began. "Pop an' I had a still whar we made our own corn into moonshine. I was a-working at the still one day when them rev-

enooers come and ketched me. Afore I could give the alarm, they'd hustled me off down the mountainside and had me locked up in the jail down thar in the valley. When my trial come off pop and others of the clan come, but I swore the still was mine, so's they wouldn't ketch pop, and the jedge sent me to Atlanta fer a year. Wuz yer ever locked up in jail?" the boy suddenly demanded, turning to me and fixing his big black eyes upon my face.

As I slowly shook my head, he continued:

"Wal, ef you'd ever hadda been you'd knowed jest how I felt when those big iron doors shut together ahind me. I thought I'd die at furst, penned up ahind those thar stone walls. I declar I tried to behave myself, and after a right smart time the warden made me a trusty. I wuz given charge uv the hawgs on the farm. This give me a chanct to git out in the sun, an' I wuz happy as could be. 'Fore long I see ef I worked fast I'd have some time outa doors ter myself. I uster go out ter the road after finishin', and thar in a shady place set and dream uv pop an' the mountains.

"One day jest afore I wuz goin' in I looked up

the road and seen a woman walkin' toward me frum the town. Women-folk wuz seldom seen round them parts an' I wuz sure curus ter know who this here un wuz, so I stayed right whar I wuz.

"As the woman come 'long, I see she was right smart purty, far more'n our girls ter home. Her dress and her sunshade looked like ter me she wuz a reel lady. When she come 'long most opposite me she see me, fer she smiled ter me and spoke. This here woman axed me ef I wuz a prisoner. 'Yes,' I tol' her. 'I'm in fer a year fer making moonshine.' She come and set down on the bank aside me and axed me to tell 'er all about it.

" 'What a shame fer this great big Guv'ment ter put you in jail jes' fer a little thin' like moonshine,' she says ter me when I'd finished. I reckoned as how she wuz right, but tol' her I wuz a trusty now an' so could git out inter the fresh air and sun. She wanted ter know what a trusty wuz, an' I tol' her.

" 'Oh, I see!' she went on. 'You have more 'r less liberty. Do you ever see any uv the other prisoners?'

" 'Yes, ma'am,' I tol' her. 'I can go all over the prison.'

" 'My brother's in this cruel prison, too,' she says, of a sudden. 'He's been here fer some time, becuz he wouldn't give up a frien'. You wouldn't squeal on a frien', would yer?' she axed me, an' looked me straight in the eye.

" 'Of course not,' I allowed, as how we mountaineers never squeals.

"She axed me ef I came ter this spot every day, and when I tol' her that I did, she promised ter see me in a couple o' days and bring me sompin' good ter eat. Then she smiled an' left, walkin' back toward the city.

"I hustled through my work the next day so's I'd be sure ter be there ef she come. I waited til' the last minit, but no angel woman, as I called her ter myself, come. It wuz three days 'fore she come again. I wuz sure glad ter see her, fer I was afeerd she wuz never comin' agin.

"This here second meetin' wuz the beginnin' uv a right smart lot. Fer weeks she worked on me ter make me her slave. Afore long I wuz willin' ter do mos' anythin' jest ter see her smile. I know now I wuz jest a poor fool; she was jest

a-usin' me fer her own ends, but when all this here happened I thought she wuz the fines' and sweetes' woman that ever lived.

"The meetin's kep' up; and when she know'd I wuz under the spell she put over me, this here woman tol' me how I could win her love and undyin' gratitude.

" 'My brother's been in the prison fer a long time fer counterfeitin', she tol' me. 'He's innercent. Whenever I go ter see him the warden comes up close ter us, so's they can overhear every word we say. Do yer suppose you could smuggle a message in ter him?' And she tol' me his number.

"Bein's I agreed ter try an' succeeded, them two begun ter swap notes, with me as their messenger. This here kep' up fer some time then one day the prisoner tol' me ter tell his Sis that she should buy the cottage in Michigan. I tol' her, and wuz tol' ter tell her brother that she'd do hit at once.

"Days passed; an' though I went ter the meetin' place ev'ry day, the woman didn't come. I wuz afeerd that she'd gone ter that thar cottage ter live, when one day I seen her a-comin' down

that road agin. I wuz sure glad ter see her, an' in my joy I went up the road ter meet her. How she smiled when she seen me a-comin'! Then, I thought hit wuz because she wuz glad ter see me. But now, thanks ter the chaplain, I know'd she smiled jest becuz' she seen how right smart I wuz in her power.

"When we'd both said, 'Howdy,' she tol' me ter tell her brother she'd bought the place he'd wanted her ter, an' that Jim was thar a'ready. Jim, she tol' me, wuz another brother who was helpin' her ter fix up the cottage.

"I wuz mighty glad ter carry the message inter the prison. The brother tol' me ter tell his Sis that he wanted Jim ter go ter Chicago an' hire a loft an' then ter buy a machine. The machine wuz ter be sent ter the loft, an' then Jim could take hit apart and carry hit up ter the Michigan cottage in his auto.

"This here message I delivered the next day. Again fer days I didn't see my angel woman, for she wuz away attendin' ter the last orders of her brother. Then sudden as she'd gone, back she come. 'Tell my brother,' she ordered, 'that Jim is doin' jest as he wanted he should and that he'll

have the machine in the cottage in a few more days.'

"All this time I wuz enjoyin' the part uv messenger. It give me a chanct ter see the woman, an' many a purty castle I built in the air while I carried message after message inter the prison an' out agin.

"The next message from this here prisoner give me the answer ter what hit wuz all about. 'Tell Sis,' he said, 'that the plates are buried back uv the barn in the yard. Jim's ter dig in the right-han' corner next ter th' gate an' he'll find the plates in a box. Jim's ter git' 'em an' take 'em ter the cottage in Michigan an' hol' 'em until I git out'n prison.'

"Bein's I wuz so fascinated by this here woman I kep' her secret. Fool that I wuz, I thought that now, anyway, she'll love me since I know'd what they're up ter.

"At las' my time wuz up, an' the warden give me a few words uv advice an' let me go. I went right ter the address she'd give me in Atlanta. Fer the fust time I tol' her uv my love.

" 'Not until my brother's out uv prison, John,' she tol' me. 'Then—well, we'll wait an' see.' That

meant a year's wait, but I wuz young an' hopeful.

"Their secret was locked up safe in my heart an' I returned ter the mountains, only ter be grabbed an' placed in the draft an' sent over here. I've written ter her sev'ral times, an' the las' answer she sent tol' me her brother expected ter git out the fust uv July."

Instinctively I glanced at the calendar. Only one more month and the game would be on.

How simple it all was to me, as I sat there listening to John drawl out his story. The man confined at Atlanta for passing bogus money, but the secret service men unable to find the plates; the plan to hire the cottage in the wilds of Michigan, where they could work unmolested; brother Jim's hiring the loft and installing a printing press; the digging up of the plates back of the barn and sneaking them into the cottage in the night. By now everything must be in readiness to flood the country with the bogus money, and then a quick get-away while the members of our secret service in the United States were engaged on war work.

It certainly was a mighty clever scheme, and

by its very boldness and carefully thought-out details had in it every element of success. And if it had not been for John and the discernment of the chaplain, the criminals would have had no more trouble. But we still had plenty of time, as it seemed, to block them. That was why the train for Tours, that night, carried a complete report of the case safely locked in the government mail bag. I knew that the chief at Tours would hurry the report along to G. H. Q., and without a doubt from there it would be speedily sent on to Washington.

In the days which followed, I often wondered how the soldier from Tennessee was faring. I wondered, too, if he had ever regretted telling us about his secret. I little dreamed that later on he was once more to startle me with a statement that seemed almost as incredible as the first.

It was weeks afterward when he was in town on leave one day that he came to me with his amazing tale. In the streets of this French town he had passed the "angel woman" with the man he had last seen in the prison in Atlanta. Surely, he thought, his eyes must have deceived

him; but after another and closer scrutiny he knew he could not be mistaken.

"Impossible," I assured him. "The Department of Justice seized them long ago, and unquestionably they are both in Atlanta by now. They couldn't possibly be here."

"I know'd 'em both too well ter be fooled!" he persisted. "I got too good a look at 'em!"

This seemed too wild a tale, yet John's very earnestness convinced me that the hotels at least should be checked up. It would require only a few hours to cover them and learn whether there were any American civilians registered.

"John must have been wrong in his identification," I confided to my men, when they returned with the report that there were no American tourists registered.

But, no, the very next day John appeared at my office. There was no mistaking the note of triumph in his voice.

"I know now fer sure they're the same!" he ejaculated. "I got a good look at 'em this time." The boy seemed so confident that in spite of my firm belief in the infallibility of the Department of Justice, I had to admit that somehow and in

some way the counterfeiters had made a clean get-away.

I was not quite sure in my own mind just what my status in the case might be, even if I did find that they were the two from Atlanta. I determined, however, to go after them and let the future take care of itself.

The red tape was quickly cut, and before nightfall I had added a new member to my force. John was transferred to our department, and he was all eagerness to begin his work. It wouldn't do, however, to send him against such clever persons as these two undoubtedly were until he was trained. For this reason he was placed under intensive instruction. He was drilled for hours in how to act and what to say when he was finally sent out on the trail of the suspects.

Luck was with us, for John, haunting the streets, met the woman face to face on the second day he was out. The recognition was mutual. With a gasp of surprise the woman burst out:

"Why, it's John!"

Right well did John remember his instructions. Adroit questions soon brought forth the information that he was seeking: the name of

the hotel where they were staying, and the name they had assumed.

"You must come to see us, John," urged the woman, in parting. "I know my brother will be glad to see you."

John promised to come the next day. And sure enough his face aglow with excitement, he rushed into my office on the following day.

"I wuz right, Major!" he shouted. "I've not only met the woman, but she's tol' me all about herself. They're at the Hôtel Bordeaux, registered under the name uv Carrol. They're registered as Canadians."

I had located the two counterfeiters in my bailiwick, but, like the man who won the elephant at a raffle, now that I had them I didn't know just what to do with them.

"Anyway," I mused to myself, "the chief will tell me what to do." So another long report went to the chief at Tours and brought back a telegram the next day.

"Keep them under surveillance. Get them to tell you their story. Keep me posted," it read.

John was again called in for instructions. This time he was to make the promised call. If pos-

sible, he was to pump them and find out if the scheme had gone through as originally planned and in just what manner they had escaped into France.

The only information that John could glean from this clever pair was that they were both Canadians and were travelling under the protection of Canadian passports—another complication. This information, although of value in warning us that we would have to proceed very cautiously, did not give us the details we wanted. We must study the man to determine just where his weakness lay and then play upon that until his confidence was won. This accomplished, the rest would be easy.

Captain Rogers was selected for this work. For years Rogers had studied and taught psychology in one of our colleges over here; and if a man could be read, Rogers was the one to do it.

"Major," Rogers reported, after a while, "I think in reality this man Carrol is an Italian. He is about medium height, weighs between 165 and 175 pounds, is dark-skinned with black, fishy eyes, heavy eyebrows, and black hair. He is

careless in his dress and has every indication of being a man who is weak morally. The woman is without a doubt the master mind now, irrespective of what happened in the States, and she is the one to watch. If we can get this man away from her and stage some parties, we can get them—of that I am sure. We must, however, provide someone to take care of the woman while this is going on or she will surely spoil the game."

"All right, then," I suggested. "You are to pose as a man from the States sent over here to look after the welfare of the men from Tennessee. John can arrange for you to be introduced. If you find it necessary to have a woman's aid, let me know, and either Marie or Yvonne will come in to help you."

John proved to be of real value. He entered into the work with a zest that spoke well for the ultimate success of our plans.

"It's jest like play-actin'," he confided to me, when he had been told how he was to prepare the way for Rogers.

The stage was set. As if by chance, Rogers entered the café of the hotel, after making sure

that the party of three—the woman, Carrol, and John—was there. Introductions were quickly given; the natural sequence was that Rogers was invited to a seat at their table.

"I'm certain now of my first analysis," reiterated Rogers the next morning, at my office. "We must watch this woman if we want to write 'success' at the end of this case. She's the wise one and on the alert every minute."

"What does this remarkably clever woman look like?" I interrogated, interested in getting a clear mental picture of her.

"Like Carrol, she is of medium height, and slender. What she lacks in size, she makes up in spirit. Her big black eyes seem always to be studying you and sizing you up and wondering just who you are. Her eyes alone show that she is not to be fooled easily. Maybe they are set a little too far apart and that is what gives them their sinister look, especially as she has the habit of looking out through half-closed lids. Her dark skin, set off by a crown of heavy jet-black hair, gives her a wild type of beauty, which is more pronounced when she opens wide her eyes. Altogether, a cool, calculating type of woman—

and suspicious, but trying not to show it. As I studied her I gathered the impression that she has a temper which it is better not to arouse. I think Carrol is a bit afraid of her, although to watch them you would think they were honeymooners, irrespective of their claim that they are just brother and sister."

It was necessary for Rogers to work very carefully—when one is on a case where one person is involved the case can at times be rushed, but when working on one subject with another in the background, the detective must be very cautious, especially when the one in the background happens to be a suspicious woman.

Rogers knew Bordeaux like a book. Through the connection which the office maintained with the underworld, we were able to stage several parties for Carrol's benefit. Here, we could get him away from the watchful eye of the woman, and in time we hoped to win his confidence to the point where we could pump him about the American end of the game.

While all this was going on, we were keeping a close watch on the woman. Yvonne was called in and, through Rogers, introduced to the woman.

Yvonne's job was to keep Miss Carrol, as she called herself, entertained while Rogers, with Carrol in tow, "did" the town.

Levy, our friend from the underworld, was taken into our confidence; he promised to help. He faithfully kept his promise, and through him we were able to keep Carrol busy almost every night, while Yvonne was supplied with tickets to the theatre and to other places of interest to visitors—all this keeping Miss Carrol occupied.

Then one night we sprung the trap. At the time Levy was entertaining the two men, and, in an apparent burst of confidence, made a suggestion.

"You know, Rogers, if we wanted to and could find the right type of helper, we could clean up millions by counterfeiting the fifty-franc note. It's dead easy."

"Yes, but I don't know of any one who is clever enough to make the plates for us," lamented Rogers.

While this little byplay was going on, Carrol, well under the influence of the generous portions of wine which Levy had repeatedly forced upon

him, sat in his chair at the table and blinked his eyes. Finally the scheme suggested by Levy penetrated to his brain.

"S-shay," he stuttered, drunkenly, "l-let me in on this and I'll m-make the plates. I'm an expert engraver and I know how!"

At last we had him! If he were telling the truth—and that could be quickly learned—our chase was over. Rogers believed—and rightly—that it would not do to rush Carrol too far on this first night, especially since he was well on the road to oblivion by this time, so he merely added:

"All right, old man. We'll have a meeting tomorrow night where we can work out the plans and get started. Let's go out now."

Rogers, elated at his success, could not sleep until he had told me about it. And I agreed with him that within a few days we would have this clever pair of crooks just where we wanted them. I little reckoned on that woman, however.

Consternation reigned in our office the next afternoon when John, who had been sent up to the hotel to keep an eye on the pair, burst into my private office and stammered:

"Major, the-the Carols uv sk-skipped! They t-took the noon t-train fer P-paris."

Poor John. He had put his heart and soul into the work and now to see it apparently go for naught was too much for him.

"It's the woman," I exclaimed. "She saw the trap and, knowing Carrol's love of boasting, has checkmated us by spiriting him away to Paris."

This was not the first time in history, nor would it be the last, when a clever woman had upset a man's carefully thought-out plans. In the pursuit of criminals one soon learns to take the defeats philosophically. Arrangements were now quickly made for Rogers and John to follow the pair to Paris. Other cases pending at the Base at this time prevented me from joining the expedition.

Locating the two in Paris was not nearly so difficult as one might suppose. The Carrols were forced to register at the French control office upon their arrival; and as they were travelling under passports issued under that name, they would of necessity have to continue the use of them. The French kept a close record of all

foreign civilians in Paris; so it was but the work of an hour to locate the hotel where they were staying.

We could but admire the woman for her cleverness in forestalling us by rushing Carrol to Paris. If we were to be successful, we knew that we must at all times in the future take her into our calculations. We could never hope for success, if we ignored her. Rogers and John, knowing this, determined to give her a wide berth in all future plans and keep out of her sight. Their only hope of completing the case lay in finding Carrol by himself. As long as the woman was in sight, they must necessarily hide in the background.

For days she did not allow Carrol to leave her side. No child ever had a nurse more constant or attentive. The ever-alert Rogers could only hope that the woman would soon tire of her constant attendance and, believing that her precautions were not necessary, would relax her vigilance. If she did—— Well, Rogers was always prepared to swoop down on Carrol and finish what had been started at Bordeaux.

In and out of the cafés, along the boulevards,

through shops, art galleries, and museums, the chase went on. It soon became evident from the constant bickerings between Carrol and the woman that he was chafing under his enforced seclusion.

There is no knowing how long this case might have continued had it not been for assistance from an unforeseen quarter. The "sister"—whom by the way we always called Mrs. Carroll—was prostrated with the "flu" and forbidden by the doctor to see any one except the nurses. So Carrol, like a child just released from the restraint of school, seized upon the opening and suddenly appeared in the cafés alone. Here was the golden opportunity Rogers had been so patiently awaiting, and he was not slow to grasp it.

Carrol had shown a marked preference for a certain café and here he came just as soon as he could. Rogers and John waited for two nights for the vigilant invalid to appear, and when she did not, Rogers decided it was time to show himself. On the third night, before Carrol arrived at the café, the two entered and succeeded in securing a small table near the door.

A few minutes after they had settled themselves, in walked Carrol. He noticed our two men as he entered. If he was surprised to see them in Paris, he was wise enough not to show it.

"Of all persons!" he ejaculated. "What brings you two to Paris? I thought you were fixtures in Bordeaux."

"Well," drawled Rogers, "we came up here for a good time, principally."

While Rogers was giving Carrol his reasons for being in Paris, he was covertly watching to see just how they would be received. He knew full well that everything depended upon Carrol's believing his story. Carrol apparently thought that Rogers was telling the truth for he at once proposed ways for the three to have a good time. Rogers, agreeing to all, patiently awaited the time he knew would come when a man of Carrol's temperament, tiring of the sameness of café pleasures, would crave more exciting things. And, just as he had anticipated, one night the climax came, for Carrol leaned over and whispered:

"I'm sick of all this. You remember the last night in Bordeaux?" Rogers nodded his head in

reply, and Carrol continued: "I still would like to start a game like that. The old woman," he added, with a sheepish grin, "objects to my going in for any such work over here. That's why she yanked me away from Bordeaux so quick when I told her what we were planning. But this time we'll keep it to ourselves."

Not desiring to show too much eagerness for the plan, Rogers needed considerable urging before he would even consider starting it again.

"All right," he finally consented, "I'll send for Levy, if you're in earnest. When he comes we can complete the deal here as well as in Bordeaux."

I knew that Rogers must be on a hot trail when I received his wire asking that Levy be sent on to Paris to help him. I lost no time in rounding up Levy and dispatching him.

Levy's arrival in Paris was the signal for all of them to get to work in earnest. The others did not even give him a chance to rest up from his trip. On the first night the four conspirators, for by now John had been taken in on the deal, gathered in a private room at the Café Chapeau Rouge to make their arrangements.

Levy explained in detail how he proposed to counterfeit and dispose of the spurious money once it was made.

"The only things we lack," he ended, "are the plates." Then, as if struck with a sudden thought, he turned to Carrol. "By the way, old man, didn't you say you were an engraver?" he nonchalantly asked.

Every nerve of Carrol's fellow conspirators tensed while they awaited the reply of the master crook. Were they at last to get the real story from this man?

"Sure," boasted Carrol. "You fellows make the necessary arrangements for the paper and the printing plant and I'll attend to the plates."

"You're just kidding us, now," broke in Rogers. "You never did such work in your life!"

"Oh, yes, I have!" said Carrol. "I once made a set of plates that defied detection."

"Where?" shot back Rogers.

"Never mind *where*," grinned Carrol. "Maybe sometime I'll let you in on a big secret, but not now."

Poor Rogers! He had hoped to clinch the case then and there by that one word, "Where,"

but no, the man was still doubtful of his associates. And for the present Rogers had to be content to plod along with what he already had secured.

The counterfeiting plans proceeded as fast as Rogers dared to permit. We did not propose really to go into the business of counterfeiting French money and thus lay ourselves open to prosecution. Rogers knew that he was skating on very thin ice in even planning such a *coup,* but as long as he could keep the arrangements in his own hands, he let it proceed. In this way Carrol was with them every night, and more than once he seemed on the verge of telling them of some of his recent exploits. It looked as if our case might be closed any day when, one night, Carrol failed to show up at the rendezvous.

Fearing that Carrol might be ill and thus spoil it all, Rogers hurried to the hotel where the Carrols were registered. Discreet questions to the clerk as to their whereabouts brought back the astonishing question:

"Are you Mr. Rogers?"

Rogers, answering in the affirmative, was further startled when the clerk reached into a

drawer, brought forth a sealed envelope, and handed it to him. Hastily tearing it open, Rogers read:

> You cannot induce my nusband to join you in your nefarious schemes. If you attempt to follow us or again bother us I shall report it all to the police.

It was signed "J. L. Carrol."

Gone! Checkmated again!

Carrol, in a burst of confidence, had disclosed the plans to the woman and, although she was just recovering from an illness, they had once more run away.

At this hotel it seemed they were registered as man and wife, and the lady was carrying out the rôle in this letter.

"As soon as I learned that they were gone," said Rogers, in making his report to me, "I went at once to the French and found that they had their passports viséd so that they could visit Pau."

Naturally, I was angry at the person for twice beating us at our own game, but defeat was not in our vocabulary, so we once more set about evolving new plans.

New faces would of necessity now have to take

up the work. The woman would run without a doubt, if either Rogers or John showed up at Pau. In the face of our past failures, we determined to try new tactics. Lieutenant Greene was detailed to the case. If any of my men could win this woman's confidence, Greene was the man. Furthermore, we were fully aware of Carrol's penchant for pretty faces. Bearing this in mind, we sent Marie along to assist Greene. This time we decided to fall back upon that old standby, Jealousy, to help us.

Greene, with Marie posing as his sister, went directly to the same hotel that sheltered the Carrols and there registered.

For the first few days, Greene and Marie kept to themselves. They wanted to study the situation to determine just how to proceed. And the plan which they finally evolved surely promised success.

One evening Greene casually sauntered into the billard room. Here, he was knocking the balls around when Carrol came in. Greene soon induced the willing Carrol to join him in a friendly game. While the two men were playing, Marie wandered in. She was interested in watch-

ing the game, and an introduction followed. When the game was finished, the three walked out upon the balcony; and before the good-nights were said, Mrs. Carrol had joined the party. Greene passed himself off as a French contractor, at Pau for a rest; while Carrol admitted being a Canadian travelling for pleasure.

Carefully nursed, the acquaintance begun this night soon ripened into a kind of friendship. Mrs. Carrol seemed delighted to be with the fascinating Greene; while Marie, clever girl that she was, soon had Carrol following her around all the time.

At last, we thought, we have blinded Mrs. Carrol's eyes.

When he desired, Greene could be the most fascinating of men—he was on his mettle to win where others had failed. Marie, on her part, soon proved as clever as Greene, and before long she had Carrol a captive.

Quiet, balmy air loaded with the scent of innumerable flowers, a full moon shining on distant mountains or water, a pretty girl all interested in every word, the combination has made a fool of more than one man—Marie won.

"What an interesting life you have had!" commented Marie, gazing up into Carrol's eyes. "Do tell me more."

A man, otherwise keen, in order to impress a fair one will often tell her his innermost secrets.

"Please tell me the most exciting event of your life," begged Marie.

"I'm afraid if I did," drily commented Carrol, "that you would never speak to me again."

But Marie told him how much she longed for adventure, and how she despised humdrum, law-abiding citizens, and presently Carrol succumbed to the influence of the night and the girl and, in his desire to shine, told the essentials of the story we were so eager to get.

"And that's the reason we had to come to France," he said, in conclusion. As he uttered these words Mrs. Carrol, with Greene in attendance, came around the corner of the walk. Greene felt her body stiffen at the sight of the two so close together and, having overheard the man's last words he wondered if Mrs. Carrol also had caught the drift of what he had been saying.

If she had overheard Carrol, she could not help realizing that he was confiding to this slip

of a girl not only his secrets, but hers also. But not by a look nor a sign, except for that almost imperceptible stiffening of her body, did she betray what must have been running through her mind. With a joke about the dangers of the moonlight, she entered into the conversation as if nothing were amiss.

Later that same night Marie repeated to Greene the story she had so tactfully drawn from Carrol. Elated at their success, they decided the news was too good to keep until morning, and so they passed it on to me.

No doubt many readers will remember that during the war the newspapers throughout our country cautioned everyone to be on the watch for a counterfeit *twenty-dollar bill.* Carrol claimed that he was the cause of that warning. By the time he had finished serving his sentence, he confided to Marie, the woman with Jim's help had fixed up the cottage in Michigan. Giving the Department of Justice men the slip when released from the penitentiary, he had made his way to the cottage.

Upon his arrival there, the three proceeded to print a million dollars' worth of counterfeit

bills. As soon as the job of printing was completed, the press was dismantled and, with the plates, carried out in a boat at night and sunk in the lake.

Starting with Chicago, the trio quickly flooded that city with the counterfeits, then hurried east. Cleveland, Buffalo, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston were visited in turn, and large amounts of the spurious money exchanged for good bills. Finishing up at Boston, the trio separated. Jim departed for California, while Carrol and his wife made their way to Montreal, Carrol's native city.

By the lavish expenditure of the ill-gotten money, they were successful in obtaining the proper permission and passports to visit the Continent. Delaying not a whit longer than necessary, the two went to England. Even here they did not tarry, but hastened across the channel to France. Fearing Paris, they had decided to hide in Bordeaux. Such was the story that I heard from Marie over the telephone at two o'clock in the morning.

"Good work, Marie! Keep a close watch on them and just as soon as the chief arrives in his

office, I will secure the necessary authority to arrest them and will come to Pau in the motor-car."

My arrival at Pau entailed disappointment. All the way down I had been chuckling over the fact that finally we had succeeded in fooling the woman and over her surprise when we arrested them both and deported them to the United States.

We swung up the driveway of the hotel and as I jumped out of the car at the steps, Greene met me with a long face, and informed me that the birds had once more flown away.

The woman *had* overheard Carrol!

"Where did they go?" I demanded.

"Biarritz," was Greene's laconic answer.

Off to Biarritz we started. This time we were determined that if we caught up with them they would not do any more running around. Biarritz is a long distance from Pau, but my chauffeur made little of it.

Another disappointment here!

"Yes, they had registered at the French bureau, but remained only long enough to get something to eat and then had hired a carriage and

left for Hendaye," was the gist of the report I received from the Frenchman in charge of the bureau.

"On to Hendaye!" I ordered, determined to get them. Once more we burned up the roads. It had now developed into a race for the International Bridge, I was sure, with the odds in our favour, since the frontier would not be opened. We were banking heavily on the fact that only at certain times was the frontier opened for the ingress or egress of travellers.

As we swung down the hill into Hendaye, we saw a carriage drawn up before the customs office. Taking the corners on two wheels, we came to the end of the bridge. Hastily I jumped out and ran for the gate at the centre of the bridge and arrived just in time to see the two Carrols cross that little white line that meant safety to them, and step into the sanctuary of Spain.

I could not follow, since I was in uniform. Had I stepped across the line the Spanish gendarmes waiting there would have seized me and I should have been interned for the remainder of the war.

Within three feet of me they stopped. They seemed to enjoy my discomfiture hugely, and they laughed at me. Then they turned, and arm in arm they slowly started for the little town across the bridge.

"Good-bye, Major," mocked Carrol, and the woman blew me a kiss as they walked on across the bridge and so out of reach.

The case was now for ever out of my hands, and the only thing I know definitely about it further is that the criminals were never caught.

I heard it estimated that when their trail was finally lost somewhere in Italy, they escaped with something like $350,000.

As to where the slip came, in letting them get away from the Michigan cottage, I never knew. My chief did send the first report on to G. H. Q., but I am left wondering if it was received at Washington before the Carrols left.

## THE ROMORANTIN SPY

THE club at Romorantin was the gathering place not only for the officers of the aviation experimental camp at that town, but also for the officers of the large Intermediate Supply Depot at Gievres.

No one knew and no one seemed to take the trouble to find out why Monsieur Pricard had decided upon this particular town wherein to establish his club. But in April, 1918, he suddenly appeared upon the scene and announced that he proposed to open a club there for the benefit of the American officers in the Gievres-Romorantin district. Inasmuch as the Americans were then carrying on a series of experiments in aviation, at the suggestion of the commanding officer of the camp, the local French intelligence officer conducted an investigation of the man.

Pricard, according to his passports and travelling permit, was an American citizen and as such

was entitled to the protection of his government, yet he seemed more like a Frenchman than an American. Rather short he was and of a rotund build. His black bushy hair and equally black bushy beard gave one the impression that his forbears without a doubt were French, and so no one wondered when it was learned that he spoke French with no trace of an accent. The only explanation vouchsafed to the local intelligence officer was that this same Mr. Pricard had for years been a *maître d'hotel* in New York. Although too old for trench warfare, yet still desirous of helping France as well as the United States, he had come across the ocean to do his bit by operating a club for the American officers. This in itself was a laudable ambition, but more especially so when it became known that he was an adept at mixing an American cocktail and in the serving of an American meal.

Nothing having been found wrong with his record, the local French intelligence officer approved of his idea of establishing the club and allowed him to proceed. Pricard's selection of a site for his venture proved that he knew what was desired. An old château situated in the

midst of a beautiful park was his choice. From the front the lawn sloped gently downward to where a sluggish stream flowed along to disappear in time beneath a towering stone wall whose height assured privacy. Here and there throughout the park huge shade-trees reared their stately forms to the skies, while scattered around on the velvety grass underneath were tables spread with sparkling silver and snowy linen. Altogether it was a delightful place for the officers and their friends to enjoy themselves, for the nonce forgetting that such a thing as war existed. And here, after their labour at the experimental camp or the harder day's work at the supply depot, they were wont to congregate for an evening's pleasure.

These officers knew that they were occupied with matters of vital interest to the German High Command. But, being so far away from the front and surrounded by friends as they were, they did not hesitate to discuss their most intimate problems over their coffee and cigars. Time after time they had been warned that Germany's secret service had a long arm. Yet they pinned their faith to the local French intelligence forces,

and in their "club" completely disregarded such warnings. The two colonels, one commanding the Romorantin Camp, while the other held a like position at the Intermediate Supply Depot at Gievres, had each been heard to boast that no German spy could ever escape detection in his camp.

If these colonels, however, could have been up at the front in the advance intelligence post during the St. Mihiel drive, they would have soon changed their minds about their ability to prevent the Germans from finding out all that was going on in their two camps. Up there, as the captured German officers filtered through the American Intelligence Dugouts, our secret service men picked up more than one fragment of conversation which, when pieced together, convinced the officers who were conducting the examination of the prisoners that from some source the German High Command knew altogether too much of what was taking place both at Gievres and at Romorantin. More than one German officer arrogantly slurred the Americans for their inability ever to accomplish anything at the Aviation Experimental Station. The Germans'

knowledge seemed so extensive and so accurate and their sarcasm bit so deep that the American Intelligence Section determined to move heaven and earth, if necessary, to stop the activities of these spies.

One day, when the Paris express came to a stop at the station at Gievres, among others who left the train were two dapper first-lieutenants of infantry. With all the conceit of the newly appointed officer to the secret service the two made no attempt to disguise their true mission, but rather insisted on every one's knowing that they belonged to the American Army Secret Service corps. They astounded the old colonel commanding the Intermediate Supply Depot when they announced in his outer office in voices loud enough for all to hear that they had been sent direct from G. H. Q. at Chaumont for the specific purpose of plugging the leak and capturing the German spies who were operating in that district.

The colonel, an officer of the regular army, was fast becoming accustomed to the idiosyncrasies of the army's new officers, but he was dumbfounded at their lack of tact. He had

always understood that the intelligence service operated in a secret manner, yet here were two men who believed in shouting their mission from the housetops.

Later on, in discussing with his crony, the commanding officer of the Romorantin Camp, the arrival of these two officers, the colonel in command at Gievres came to the conclusion that he would not interfere with the two anyway, inasmuch as there were no spies in their districts.

Early on the morning after their arrival the two secret service officers set themselves at their task. First, they examined the roster of each camp. Any one who was found with a name that even vaguely resembled a German one was called before them and questioned. This over, they started in on the civilian employees of the two camps. However, their questions reflected little credit either on the Intelligence Service or their own mental equipment. For days they prowled around the camps, sometimes peering into the most impossible places as if they expected the spies who were so successfully defying them would hide during the day and would appear only during the night. At other times they

sat in their quarters with the doors wide open for all to see while they studiously pored over maps of the surrounding country; then away they dashed out across-country to be gone for the remainder of the day. But their actions only burlesqued the American Intelligence Service.

At the Officers' Club they nearly precipitated a riot when, with a brazen show of authority, they demanded that every employee of the club from the manager to the lowest scullery boy be brought before them for an examination. Nor did it seem to bother them in the least that their examination came just at the dinner hour when the club was crowded. The officers present fretted and fumed at their nerve and started to protest, but the two silenced them with a threat to court-martial any one who interfered with their work. One at a time the entire personnel of the club was forced to stand before them while they pried into each one's personal history and examined the papers of each. At the completion of this farce, the two topped it all by calling the manager before them for the second time and complimenting him upon the loyalty of his organization.

From that day on one officer would hail another with, "Seen anything of our two spy-catchers to-day?" Then every one within hearing would snicker. This by-play, however, seemed to have no effect upon the two, for they continued on their way without making any comment. Each of the colonels sent a letter of protest to General Headquarters and recommended the removal of the two. But if the letters were received there, they were ignored, because the spy-hunt still kept on.

Finally the storm broke. One Sunday afternoon when the club was crowded the two officers appeared with three strange French officers, and after arresting the manager and his chef they closed up the club. Loud and bitter were the complaints that broke upon the Sunday's peace and quietness when this last bit of foolishness was carried through. Both the commanding officer of the Gievres Camp and the one at Romorantin kept the wires hot with messages of protest to G. H. Q. But if their previous protests had been ignored, they could not murmur now at the promptness of the reply from G. H. Q.

"I have the utmost confidence in the ability

and judgment of the two officers. You are directed to render them every assistance in transporting their prisoners to Paris for trial." And it was signed by no less a personage than General Pershing himself.

From the same train at Gievres from which had alighted the two spy-catchers, as they had been dubbed, there also alighted three French soldiers who had just come from the front. Unobtrusively this trio claimed their baggage and, shouldering their kits, stepped off the station platform and started back down the track. Slowly they staggered along under the weight of their burdens to disappear at last around a bend.

However, if any one had observed their actions, once they were sure of being safely sheltered from the view of those on the station, he would have reported them to the police as suspicious characters.

Simultaneously the three threw their packs over the fence into the bushes that lined the tracks at this point. No sooner were their packs over than two of the three followed after to crouch down out of sight, while the third one retraced his steps as far back as the bend. There

secreted behind a small bush that commanded a view of not only the tracks but also the station, this lone French soldier stood immobile for fully ten minutes gazing intently back in the direction whence he had just come. At last satisfied that no one had taken more than a passing interest in their departure, he returned to where his comrades were hiding. With a low word all of them, again shouldering their packs, turned their backs upon the railroad tracks and struck off into the dense forest. For nearly an hour they kept on the march, until at length they reached an old deserted hut standing in a small clearing. Without more than a few moments' rest the three set about making it habitable.

When the work of clearing out the hut was completed, two of the three started preparing the evening meal; meanwhile the third man, who seemed to be the leader, brought forth the uniform of a private of the American Army. After the meal was eaten and darkness had begun to close down over the woods, he changed his French uniform for the American one and disappeared into the faint shadows of the trail which all three had so recently travelled. This time there was

no secrecy about his movements as he made his way back along the tracks to the station at Gievres, where he mingled with first one group of Americans and then another, all the while listening to the gossip of the camp. Some of it must have amused him, for a smile spread slowly over his face as he joined yet another group on their way back to the camp. Somewhere along the road he dropped out of sight to appear hours later at the railroad station again. But where before he had seemed not to fear detection, he was now all caution. Carefully he sought the shelter of the darker nooks on the platform to disappear ultimately down the tracks and on to the place where his two comrades were awaiting his return at the wood-chopper's hut.

If these three were endeavouring to keep out of sight, they were successful. During the weeks that followed they hugged the little clearing during the day, only venturing forth after nightfall. At night, however, all three dressed themselves in civilian clothes and after making fast the door of their little hut stole away into the piney darkness of the forest, later on to meet for their evening meal in some French restaurant in

the town of Romorantin. For weeks they kept up this manœuvring—this hiding in the hut in the forest by day and stirring forth only at night after darkness had fallen. Then, one day, they quietly packed up, destroyed the evidences of their occupancy of the hut, and again going back down the tracks to the station at Gievres, they boarded the Paris express and were gone.

The trial of Pricard and his confederate created quite a furor among the officers of the two camps. More than one of them who had been entertained at the club journeyed on to Paris to appear there as a character witness for the accused. However, that testimony was never given, for after they had heard a certain Captain Walton tell his story on the witness-stand, these officers saw their mistake and quietly returned to Gievres.

"I was the one assigned to take charge of this case," testified Captain Walton. "Before I attempted to work on it, I went to the town to look over the situation. Even in my brief visit there I saw enough to convince me that if we were to be successful we would have to divert the at-

tention not only of the spies themselves but also fool the American officers stationed there. So I ordered Lieutenant Cosgrove and Lieutenant Leigh to the camp as a smoke screen," and the captain slowly cast a smile full of meaning in the direction of those officers who seemed so anxious to tell how loyal Pricard was to the Allied cause. "The two lieutenants performed their difficult task in a very commendable manner—in fact, they performed it so well as completely to divert attention from me and my two assistants. I established my headquarters in an old hut in the forest that one of the French intelligence officers had told me about, and from that point I directed the operation.

"Cosgrove and Leigh right away saw the exact situation and they reported to me that the only place where it was possible to find out what we wanted to know was right in the club itself. They stated that night after night they had heard the most confidential secrets of the aviation camp freely discussed by our officers and no one seemed to mind that Pricard was always hovering near by in the background. Strangely enough Pricard seemed to be the one who although not belonging

to any army yet had full access to the secrets of ours.

"One night, during the height of the revelry, I managed to get inside the park to watch and while hiding in a clump of bushes I saw Pricard and his accomplice start out to make a thorough search of the grounds as soon as the last officer had left. As I watched them throwing the light from their electric torches this way and that, under each and every bush, I knew that it would be only a question of time before I would be discovered if I remained where I was. And so with an air of unconcern and ready with the excuse at the tip of my tongue, if I were questioned, that I had fallen asleep there, I boldly sauntered out through the gate and escaped without detection.

"The extreme care used by the accused when they searched the grounds," continued Walton, "convinced me that they were altogether too solicitous for the welfare of any one left in the park. To my mind it could only mean one thing —that crooked work was going on at the club. Their actions made me determined to pay a visit there after hours. A glance around the place

shut in by its high stone wall showed me the difficulty of getting inside by scaling that. The brook, however, where it ran beneath the wall, seemed to offer less resistance than any other place. At that spot entrance would only mean a short swim under water.

"The next night found the three of us attempting to get in by this way, only after a few strokes, to bump our heads against the heavy iron bars placed there years before to frustrate just such efforts as ours. After a hasty search around we finally found a piece of joist that answered for a jimmy, and with it we pried the lower part of the bars far enough apart to allow us to squeeze our way through and yet not far enough to show any chance observer that the bars had been tampered with. Then, filling our lungs with air, the three of us dived to the bottom of the brook and, using the bars to help us we worked our way through to the inner side. Stealthily we crawled up on the lawn where we sat down for our clothes to dry before we made a closer examination of the club house.

"The château had a large covered porch on the front side facing the lawn, and near the corner

where we stood was a tree whose branches made an ideal ladder for us. Leaving one man on guard at the foot of the tree, my other assistant and I slowly climbed upward until we were high enough to step off on the sloping roof of the porch. Then, flat on our stomachs we dropped and slowly, without making a particle of noise, we squirmed along until we reached a point directly beneath the windows of Pricard's room. The night was warm—the windows all open—and the two plotters, content with their earlier search of the grounds, did not for a moment suspect that we were so near to them, listening to all they had to say, yet from our place of concealment we could overhear every word spoken in that room.

"Night after night we forced our way through those bent bars, swam the brook, climbed the tree, and squeezed ourselves flat alongside the house to listen to Pricard dictate the day's information to his confederate, who copied it all down on a typewriter.

"There was no doubt left in our minds that these two wretches were the spies who had been sending the information to Germany from this section. There remained one question, however,

which we must have answered before we close in on them—we wanted to find out their system of communication. We must know how they managed so well to send their information halfway across France and into Germany without being caught. It was as important that we cut their lines of communication as it was that we arrest the spies.

"For days my two men in conjunction with the French watched the incoming and outgoing mails. Every letter that looked at all suspicious was steamed, opened, and the contents carefully read. But this was to no purpose—Pricard was too clever to stoop to such an ordinary method of sending his messages. We next took up the study of every civilian who came to the club. Among these we came across one very interesting personality, a girl named Marcelle. This girl was posing as a niece of Pricard and took care of his office work. Once each week we learned that she took the train for Paris ostensibly to bank the funds and to purchase new supplies.

"At this point," continued Walton, stopping for a drink of water, "I brought into the case one of our girls. Yvonne by name. She came

to Romorantin for a visit. Upon her arrival Lieutenant Cosgrove took her in charge and introduced her to the club and to Marcelle. Yvonne's task was to form a friendship with Pricard's niece. Through the assistance of the chef this was soon brought about, for our girl had right away fascinated him with her charms.

"When Marcelle made her next trip to Paris it occurred to Yvonne that she, too, needed to visit the shops there; and so the two set off for the capital together. Since our Paris office was on the watch for the girls, we had no difficulty in keeping them under the eyes of our surveillance forces. They were followed to their place of abode, a small *pension* in the Latin quarter. Not once, except when they were in the house, were they ever out from under the eyes of our men. Thus we knew when Marcelle slipped out on the second night and visited a café that even at this time was under the suspicion of the French Secret Service.

"Three different times the girls, now bosom friends, made the trip to Paris together, yet we were never able to see to whom Marcelle turned

over her papers. But when the third trip was announced I decided that the time had arrived for us to take a more active part in Pricard's little game. During the first two trips Marcelle had left Yvonne at the *pension* while she had gone to the café alone. This time I planned that Yvonne should be the one to deliver the messages. With this in mind, I went for assistance to the doctor attached to our department. He gave me a bit of tasteless white powder which, while it would make the one ill who took it, would, nevertheless, do no permanent injury. This powder I turned over to Yvonne with instructions to give it to Marcelle if possible.

"Yvonne believed that she could administer it in the morning when the chocolate was served, she said.

"The morning after their arrival in Paris, Yvonne met the maid at the door. Taking the tray from her and turning her back to Marcelle who was still in bed, she emptied the powder into the cup. Then pouring in the chocolate, she casually passed it over to her companion. It was just a tempting cup of chocolate to Marcelle, and she drank unquestioningly.

"The powder acted quickly, and before many minutes had elapsed Marcelle was deathly ill. Frightened at her sudden attack and believing that she might be dying, she implored Yvonne to look into her travelling bag and take from it the envelope she would find there and deliver it to Mlle. Brouchard at the Plaza Café.

"Instead of going to the café, however, she hailed a taxi and drove directly to our headquarters. The envelope was opened with great care. Before us lay absolute proof of the guilt of the entire number. After removing those parts of the despatches which might have proved informative to the Germans and making substitutions we sent Yvonne along to the Plaza Café to deliver the messages. But at this point our trail crossed that of the French Secret Service, for the person that Yvonne was to meet at the café was none other than Mlle. Brouchard, the notorious German messenger who even then was under surveillance.

"To make our case ironclad, we decided to have Yvonne make a trip from Romorantin to Paris for Pricard. To do this we called upon the French for aid, summoning one of their doctors

to take charge of Marcelle during the time Yvonne was away on the trip.

"At first Pricard was so furious when he learned that Yvonne had discovered what he was doing that she became alarmed and nervously clutched at the little automatic which she had concealed in the folds of her dress while she watched him breathlessly in fear that he might turn upon her. But after a while he calmed down and was willing to accept her protestations that she was ready to do almost anything for money and could keep her mouth shut about it. Pricard seemed to be getting to the point where he believed himself immune and that he could do practically anything to accomplish his purpose, consequently he decided to take the chance with Yvonne.

"The despatches which he gave her to deliver never reached their destination—I have them here," and Walton, tired from his long period on the witness stand, wearily handed over to the judge-advocate a bulky package of papers.

The lawyers for the defense made a determined effort to save the lives of these three plotters, for by now Marcelle had been arrested and included

in the trial of Pricard and the chef. However, Captain Walton had built up too strong a case. They were sentenced to be shot. On a gloomy day in the autumn of 1918 they were turned over to a French firing-squad which lost no time in evening up the score against them.

THE END